THE WILD IRISHMAN

by the Author of

"The Unspeakable Scot" and "Lovely Woman"

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BY

T. W. H. CROSLAND

Author of
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NOTE

I HAVE called this book "The Wild Irishman" in a spirit of conciliation. As a fact there are no wild Irishmen left in Ireland.

But to have suggested thus much on one's title page would, I am sure, have meant offence to the Irish, bitter disappointment to the English, and honour and glory to my ancient enemies the Scotch.

I take it upon myself to point out that in these pages the reader will find presented a new view of Ireland and the Irish.

My friends on the English Press can be warranted to assert that it is the wrong view.

When I laid down the axiom that two and two should make four for a woman as for a man, my friends on the English Press assured me that I was wrong—and a brute into the bargain.

It is worth noting that they have been making golden guineas for themselves out of the same statement ever since.

If they rake in a little pocket-money by the adoption, without acknowledgment, of my views about Ireland, I shall not be sorry.

The English Press is a glorious institution, and always short of both money and ideas.

Of its genius for misrepresentation I am convinced.

Yet it cannot alter facts—NOR STOP THE SALE OF BOOKS.

I wish to add only that I am neither a Roman Catholic nor an Orangeman, but a Yorkshireman. Therefore I shall not forego my right to say what I believe to be true.

T. W. H. C.

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The Wild Irishman

CHAPTER I

DISTRESSFUL

The person who invented the Irish question may or may not deserve well of his species. In a sense, of course, there has been an Irish question since the beginning of history. But it is only within the last century or so that we have begun to spell it with a big Q. That big Q perhaps attained its largest proportions during the eighties of last century, and associated, as it usually was, with a capital G, which stood for Gladstone, and a capital P, which stood for somebody else, it certainly did yeoman service wherever a use for letters could be found. At the time of Mr Gladstone's Home Rule campaign the existence of a highly-insistent Irish question could not be

doubted. A good deal of water has flowed under the bridges since then however, and at the present moment, and in view of the present situation of Irish affairs, one is tempted to wonder whether there now exists, or whether there really has ever existed, an Irish question with a big Q at all. It is true that at the time of writing there is an actual and undesirable famine raging in Connemara. It is true that the population of the country is on the decline, and that the standard of comfort among the people will not bear comparison with the standard of comfort in any other country in the world, unless it be in the poorer and bleaker regions of Kamchatka; and it is true also that Irishmen as a body continue to exercise themselves both at street corners, and on all sorts of platforms, in a habit of rhetoric, which many years of shouting have made second nature with them. For all that, the Irish question as a portentous and vital matter appears to be somewhat played out. One may safely say that in Ireland, at anyrate, it has been reduced to an obscurity which allows of its being now spelt with about the smallest "q" in ordinary use among printers. In

England it has been allowed to disappear, in favour of the Russo-Japanese War, Protection, and Do We Believe? On the whole, though it no doubt harrows the souls of the horde of carpet-baggers which have come to us out of Ireland, this condition of affairs is exceedingly salutary for Ireland itself. Now that the factions, and the tumult, and the turbulence, and the wrangling have died down, or at least been in large measure abated, the facts about Ireland are for the first time in history beginning, as it were, to swim into our ken. We are beginning to perceive, for example, that out of the quarrels and bloodshed of the past hundred years Ireland has emerged triumphant. It has been a case of a bankrupt, downtrodden and dwindling people's fight against a rich and powerful dominant people, and the weaker side has proved clearly that in the long run God is on the side of "justice." To all intents and purposes Ireland is at the present moment in full possession of all that she herself has felt it reasonable to demand. She has the franchise, she has land laws which are almost socialistic in the benefits they offer to the

cultivators of the soil, and she has local self-government. More than all, she has herself begun to recognise that the disposition of England toward her is becoming year by year less arrogant, less implacable, less contemptuous, and less severe. It has been said that Erin's appeals for reasonable treatment at the hands of England have had to be made by violence of the most brutal and terrorising kind. She has stood before us with the head of a landlord in one hand and the tail of a cow in the other, and screamed till we gave her what she wanted. And always in a large measure we have succumbed. And the singular part of it is that in no instance have we had cause, nor do we appear likely to have cause, to regret it. Of course that crown and summit of Irish blisses, Home Rule, has not yet been vouchsafed to her. But this, I believe, is due to the fact that Ireland herself is still making up her mind whether she really wants it. Half Ireland says, "Give us Home Rule," the other half says, "Please don't;" and the two parties seem to be getting on very well together by agreeing to differ. This is a true and natural settle-

ment of a problem which, as I believe, is purely artificial, arising out of the exigencies of party and the jealousies of rival demagogues, rather than out of the desires of the people. If Ireland in her heart of hearts desired Home Rule, she would have it within the next couple of years. She has the good sense to know that, however fascinating the theory of Home Rule may appear, the practice of it for her would be difficult and irksome, if not altogether disastrous. Both sides are agreed that Home Rule for Ireland means an immediate spell of civil war for Ireland. The Irish Catholic will tell you this, and the Irish Protestant is equally clear about it. In view of the condition and nature of the country, such a war were a calamity to be staved off at pretty well any cost, even if it were certain—and it is by no means certain —that the subsequent benefits would be appreciable and lasting. The politicians will tell you that it is possible to have in Ireland what is somewhat prettily called a "union of hearts." "The union of hearts which I desire," says one of them, "is a union of Irishmen of all classes and

of all creeds, from the north to the south, from the east to the west; landlords and tenants, Catholics and Protestants, Orange and Green; and I look to this union as the surest way of bringing about the national regeneration of our country." Which is exceedingly beautiful, but amounts to asking for the moon. Oil and water cannot be made to mix, and in a country where a couple of cardinals and a number of bishops were lately stoned by a rabblement of Protestants, the union of hearts may be reckoned still a great way off. Holy Ireland —and I think it is rather to her credit— will never be brought to do what England and Scotland have managed to do, namely to set the political or material interest in front of the religious or spiritual interest. Catholics and Protestants in Ireland are Catholic and Protestant from head to foot and right through, and you will never induce them to forget it. All the same it is not impossible, with the exercise of a little charity and self-restraint, for the lion to lie down with the lamb politically, if not religiously, and this is what is happening in Ireland. In other words the Irish Catholics

and Protestants have tacitly agreed that they can live in more or less amity under one government, providing that government is neither an Irish Catholic government, nor an Irish Protestant government, but an alien, impartial and practically secular government.

As we have said, the Irish question as a portent and terror to England is disappearing, if indeed it has not already disappeared. For all that, the fact remains that Ireland in the main is a distressful country. Thackeray's Snooks gives it as his opinion that "of all the *wum* countwith that I ever wead of, hang me if Ireland ithn't the wummetht." "Wum," gay and irrepressible epithet though it may be, is really and deep down not the epithet; whereas "distressful" is. There are people in the world who are born to misfortune, whose lives are touched with melancholy from beginning to end, and who cannot be brought to rejoice even by Act of Parliament. Ireland's woes may be said to be largely temperamental and still more largely "misfortunate." Her very position in the geographical scheme of things is

strikingly lonesome and unhappy. Practically she is the last outpost of Europe, and a little one at that. With sheer Atlantic on one side of her, and sixty miles of sea between herself and England, it is impossible for her to get rid of a certain feeling of isolation which is not good for the spirits. The soft rain that is always over her may heighten the green of her meadows, but it keeps her damp and watery and preternaturally boggy. She has no harbours of the kind that are essential to fishermen, and though some of her ports may be admirable, there is little in the country that calls for the use of them. Thus physically handicapped, Ireland has necessarily produced a people who are in all respects a people to themselves. The religious faculty in them has been highly developed, the commercial faculty might seem to have been left out of their composition. By nature they are a simple, cheerful, unambitious, warm-hearted race, and they have suffered accordingly. Sir Francis Drake, or some instrument of his, planted the potato upon them. James I. planted the Scotch on them. George III. gave them a Lord Lieutenant and a Secre-

tary. The potato, the Scotch, and Dublin Castle have been the three bitter curses which have brought this people to the ghastliest social and political passes. All three are ineradicable, but they may be mitigated. This is what Ireland wants.

CHAPTER II

THE SHILLELAGH

As the Yorkshireman is said to sport on his escutcheon a flea, a fly, and a flitch of bacon, so in the popular imagination an Irishman of the real old sort is usually conceived in association with a pig, a pipe, and a shillelagh. Rightly considered, one supposes that the shillelagh is a survival of the pre-historic club. In any case, it is a weapon of some character, chiefly notable for its handiness in the matter of skull cracking, and believed to be the pride and joy of every Paddy worth his salt. The shillelagh has undoubtedly earned for the Irish a reputation for roguish and heroic delight in battle. "Tread on the tail of my coat, now," is supposed to be for ever on Irish lips, with immediate results in the article of broken heads. And when we English wish the use of a metaphor for rows and scuffles, free

fights and so forth, we have a habit of remarking that the affair amounted to "a regular Donnybrook" — Donnybrook, of course, being a sort of feast of shillelaghs to which all Ireland was wont annually to repair. Of the number of shillelaghs in Ireland at the present moment the blue books give no account. It seems to me doubtful whether there are a thousand in the whole country. One may travel through Ireland for weeks on end, and come across nothing of the sort. The only shillelagh I had the pleasure of seeing in the course of a recent, lengthy Irish journey was in the hands of a very ill-clad youth who looked more like a Lancashire cotton operative out of work than a broth of a boy. And the shillelagh in question was of polished black wood without knots, and the top of it had a nickel silver knob, like a beau's cane. The weapon, indeed, reminded one of nothing so much as a Salmon & Gluckstein, silver-headed, ebony walking-stick, cut short. The owner proudly assured me that it was his bit of a blackthorn, and the finest for miles round. It seems more than probable that the shillelagh-notion of

an Irishman had at one time something in it. While Donnybrook Fair has been suppressed, there can be no getting away from the fact that there once was a Donnybrook, and a pretty warm one to boot. Says the poet :—

"Who has e'er had the luck to see Donnybrook Fair?
An Irishman, all in his glory, is there,
With his sprig of shillelagh and shamrock so green!
His clothes spic and span new, without e'er a speck,
A neat Barcelona tied round his neat neck;
He goes to a tent, and he spends half a crown,
He meets with a friend, and for love knocks him down
With his sprig of shillelagh and shamrock so green!"

"And for love knocks him down" is quite in the "rale ould" spirit. A spectator[1] of the Donnybrook held on the 29th August 1828, described it as follows: "I rode out again to-day, for the first time, to see the fair at Donnybrook, near Dublin, which is a kind of popular festival. Nothing, indeed, can be more national! The poverty, the

[1] Prince Pückler Muskau, quoted by Croker.

dirt, and the wild tumult were as great as the glee and merriment with which the cheapest pleasures were enjoyed. I saw things eaten and drunk with delight, which forced me to turn my head quickly away, to remain master of my disgust. Heat and dust, crowd and stench made it impossible to stay long; but these do not annoy the natives. There were many hundred tents, all ragged, like the people, and adorned with tawdry rags instead of flags; many contented themselves with a cross on a hoop; one had hoisted a dead and half-putrid cat as a sign. The lowest sort of rope-dancers and posture-makers exercised their toilsome vocation on stages of planks, and dressed in shabby finery, dancing and grimacing in the dreadful heat till they were completely exhausted. A third part of the public lay, or rather rolled, about drunk; others ate, screamed, shouted and fought. The women rode about, sitting two or three upon an ass, pushing their way through the crowd, smoked with great delight, and coqueted with their sweethearts." It is notable, however, that our eye-witness continues: "My reverence for truth com-

pels me to add, that not the slightest trace of English brutality was to be perceived; they were more like French people, though their gaiety was mingled with more humour and more genuine good-nature; both of which are national traits of the Irish, and are always doubled by poteen."

Not only is Donnybrook gone, but the whole atmosphere which rendered Donnybrook possible appears to have gone with it. The knocking down of a friend for love or out of sheer gaiety and volatility of soul no longer ranks among the Irishman's accomplishments. If he fights at all, which is seldom, he fights now with clenched teeth and a fierce hatred at his heart, and usually it is about religion and has nothing whatever to do with either fun or poteen. In Dublin no more fighting goes on than occurs in the average English city of the same size. In Belfast the fighting is frequent, but it is eminently Scotch, and therefore not to be charged against Ireland. Out of Ulster, there is scarcely any fighting at all, poteen or no poteen. At the same time in one city out of Ulster, which I will not name, I was advised by the proprietor

of an hotel to prolong my stay because "we are expecting riots on Monday." Whether the riots came off or not I do not know, but I saw no accounts of them in the papers.

It is of course common knowledge that, shillelaghs laid on one side, the Irishman makes an admirable soldier. In point of fact he is a much better soldier than the Scot, though he has never had the credit for it. The best English generals from Wellington to Lord Roberts have been Irishmen, which is paradox, not a "bull." The Irish never run away; in our late wars certain non-Irish regiments, which were neither English nor Welsh, did run away. It is significant that Mr Kipling's soldiers—in "Soldiers Three" for example—are Irish, Cockney, and Yorkshire, and that the Irishman is set down for the smartest man. I have seen it remarked, and I believe it can be justified out of the military histories, that while the Irish and English regiments have usually done the rough and tumble hand-to-hand fighting in our most famous engagements, the gentlemen with the bare knees have had the good

fortune to be sent in at the tail end of the trouble, merely to execute a little ornamental sweeping up. To the eye of officers and women "nothing looks nicer" than kilts and spats. To disarrange them were a pity; therefore wherever possible we shall hold them "in reserve." On the parade ground and in processions the same thing applies; the plaudits of the crowd being invariably forthcoming for the "bonnie bare-legged laddies" newly enlisted, mayhap, out of Glasgow and Dumfries, while "seasoned Irish warriors" go past without a hand-clap. But it is the kilts that do it. There may be nothing in this, and anyway I do not suppose that the Irish care twopence. But the points for us to remember while we are on this part of our subject are, that the shillelagh is an effete weapon, that in Irish differences the principle of "a word and a blow" does not prevail, and that the Irish soldier is very competent and very courageous.

CHAPTER III

BLARNEY

BLARNEY has come to mean a certain adroitness and winningness of speech supposed to be peculiar to the Irish. If an Irishman open his mouth, the English and Scotch insist on assuming that they are being treated to blarney. The persons who affect Messrs Cook's tours hang on to the words of every Irishman they meet, particularly if he be a jarvey, and wait lovingly and with bated breath for the same phenomenon. There are no snakes in Ireland, and, sad to relate, there is very little blarney. Broadly speaking, the people seem too poverty-stricken and too apathetic for talk of any kind, much less for that sprightly loquacity and skilfulness of retort which we call blarney. The Irish jarvey, who is commonly believed to be an adept in the art, is just as much of a disappointment as the London cabby. Even in

"the noble city of Dublin" you find, as a rule, that you are being driven by a dull, flea-bitten, porter-full person, who has really not two words to say for himself. That he is a daring and reckless driver I am quite willing to admit; that he has a passion for stout and whiskey goes without saying, but that he is a wit, or a humorist, or a wheedling talker, or in any sense gifted above ordinary hack-drivers, I deny. In the smaller centres of population and in the country districts he is even duller and more flea-bitten, and more taciturn. When he trys to charge you treble fare, which is his usual practice, he does it with a snap and gracelessly; as a pointer-out of local monuments he lacks both salt and information; he has no gift for entertainment, and he drinks sullenly and with a careful eye on the clock. As for the Irish waiters, grooms, handy men, railway porters, and kindred creatures, of whose powers of humorous persuasion and repartee so much has been written, I have no hesitation in pronouncing them to be a sad, uncertain, curt, fiddle-faced company, with scarcely a smile or the materials for a smile amongst them. Their

conversation is monosyllabic, their manner barely civil, their apprehension slow, and their habit slack and perfunctory. And they are about as blarneyfied as the Trafalgar Square lions. Of the peasantry I can only say that cheerfulness, whether of notion or word, is not nowadays their strong point. They have a great way of saying "your honour" to you if you are a man, and "your ladyship's honour" if you are a woman; but after that the amount of blarney to be got out of them is infinitesimal. Grinding poverty, short-commons, a solitary life on some dreary mountain-side, and a fine view of the workhouse, do not tend to sharpen the Irish tongue any more than they sharpen the Irish wit. On the whole, therefore, I am inclined to think that nearly all the blarney that should be in Ireland has for some reason or other taken unto itself wings and flown away. The people are no longer racy of the soil. Even the gentry, who once had the credit of being roguish and devil-may-care to a fault, are become sad and sombre and flat of speech. The milk of human kindness in the Irish blood appears, in short, to have gone sour, and in place of

the old disposition to humour we have a tendency to cynicism and vituperative remark. And when an Irishman turns cynic or vituperator he takes a wonderful deal of beating, as witness the utterances in Parliament and elsewhere of that choice body of gentlemen known as the Irish Party, or the proceedings of the Dublin Corporation, or the lucubrations of the Irish press. A singular exhibition of this particular Irish weakness has quite lately been offered us by no less a person than Mr Samuel M. Hussey, who, I believe, rather prides himself on having been described as the best abused man in Ireland. Of Mr Gladstone, Mr Hussey writes as follows :—

"If Napoleon was the scourge of Europe, Mr Gladstone was the most malevolent imp of mischief that ever ruined any one country. . . . I heard him introduce the motion [The Land Act of 1881] in the House of Commons, and his speech was a truly marvellous feat of oratory. He was interrupted on all sides of the House, and in a speech of nearly five hours in length never once lost the thread of his discourse. As far as I could judge, he never, even by accident, let slip one word of truth.

"To do them justice, the Irish Members gave such an exhibition of blackguardism as has no parallel on earth, though it earned but the mildest rebuke from their obsequious ally, Mr Gladstone.

"Mr Gladstone considered that if you gave a scoundrel a vote it made him into a philanthropist, whereas events proved it made him an eager accessory of murder, outrage, and every other crime."

It is only fair to Mr Hussey to say that he himself has received as good as he gives. For example, an Irish demagogue once treated him to the following :—

"Sam Hussey is a vulture with a broken beak, and he laid his voracious talons on the conscience of the voters. (Boos.) The ugly scowl of Sam Hussey came down upon them. He wanted to try the influence of his dark nature on the poor people. (Groans.) Where was the legitimate influence of such a man? Was it in the white terror he diffused? Was it not the espionage, the network of spies with which he surrounded his lands? He denied that a man who managed property had for that reason a shadow of a shade of influence to justify him in asking a tenant for his vote. What had they to thank him for?"

A voice: "Rack rents."

"They knew the man from his boyhood, from his *gossoonhood*. He knew him when he began with a *collop* of sheep as his property in the world. (Laughter.) Long before he got God's mark on him. It was not the man's fault but his misfortune that he got no education. (Laughter.) He had in that parish schoolmasters who could teach him grammar for the next ten years. The man was in fact a Uriah Heep among Kerry landlords. (Cheers.)"

Here surely is blarney with a vengeance. Among a people which was otherwise than glib of expression such writing and such oratory would be difficult to evolve. When presumably cultivated men, for Mr Hussey's assailant in this instance was a priest, allow themselves to indulge in such childish objurgation, what wonder is it that the commonality should be found to have lost their sense of what is proper to decent speech and reasonable argument. The demagogues of Ireland have indubitably gone a great way towards ruining the native taste and innate good breeding of the Irish people. Like the ha'penny papers of England they have made their fortunes and their power by the degrada-

tion of the masses. It is possible that the poverty of the country left them absolutely without other weapons wherewith to fight the haughty national enemy, England; it is certain that without these demagogues, and without their raging and blistering words, and the foul and brutal actions which frequently followed them, landlordism in Ireland would never have been scotched. As it is, the landlord has been put in his place and the chances of the natural heirs of the soil have been greatly enhanced. No drastic revolution of this kind can be brought about without loss even to the winning side. And in my opinion not the least of the losses of the winning side in this matter has been the transformation of blarney into flatness and commination. Under the heel of the tyrant the Irish people retained their faculty for mirth and mirthful speech; the exhortations of the demagogue and the agitator have brought them freedom, opportunity, and a distinct abatement of spirits. As the world goes, one is now compelled to reckon Ireland in the same category that one reckons those innocuous islets named Man and Wight. There is

more devil in the Isle of Dogs than all Ireland is for the moment in a position to show. It is not Ireland's fault, and it is not England's fault; it is the horrible fault of the nature of things. Whatever has happened in the past has happened because nothing better nor worse could in the nature of things have happened. What will happen in the future remains to be seen. It may be peace and the rehabilitation of a kindly, lively, and interesting people; it may be peace and the dullest sorts of apathy and decay. In any case it will be peace. The *Times*, which, after the *Saturday Review*, is admittedly the least consistent journal published on this footstool, has frequently been reproved over the mouth for remarking years ago that "In a short time, a Catholic Celt will be as rare on the banks of the Shannon as a Red Indian on the shores of Manhattan." This in effect was prophecy, though it is a hundred to one that the *Times* did not know it. If the resilient and recuperative powers of the Irish people have not been destroyed there is hope for the Irish people in Ireland. If those powers have been destroyed there is no hope for the Irish people in Ireland.

Blarney even of the vituperative order will go entirely out, and the low Scotch will come entirely in. I will do the low Scotch the credit of saying, that if they had their way, and no Irish Catholics to contend with, they could make Ireland a highly successful business proposition inside a quarter of a century. Whether they will ever get the chance is on the knees of the gods. For my own part, and this is not blarney, I hope sincerely that they never will.

CHAPTER IV

WHISKEY

The Universe as we know it abounds in enigmas. And perhaps the most stupendous enigma of all of them is called whiskey. In Scotland whiskey is the universal ichor and panacea. In Ireland a kind of whiskey which is unquestionably whiskey, but not Scotch, stands in the same friendly relation to the people. In England we drink both kinds, lying thus between the devil and the deep sea. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the baser sorts of whiskey are Scotch, and that the primal, more edifying and more inspiring sorts—if we only knew it—are Irish. He who drinks beer thinks beer. He who drinks whiskey thinks whiskey. He who drinks Scotch whiskey becomes as the Scotch people, who, as all men know, are a hectoring, swaggering, dull-witted, bandy-legged, plantigrade folk. He who drinks

Irish whiskey becomes as the Irish, who should be nimble, and neat, and vivacious, and thriftless, and careless, and lavish, and decent, and otherwise gracious. The wise man, of course, will let both varieties pass by him, excepting that he take them in thimblefuls, and then only in the shape of nightcaps. And lest the United Kingdom Alliance misconstrue what I have now said, let me here say roundly and flatly and out of a good heart—A plague on both your whiskies! The Scotch, it is true, is better to your taste; but the Irish has the merit of being better to your ethical or nobler parts. The effect of Irish whiskey upon Ireland is a matter that might fittingly form the subject of six or eight stout volumes, bound in calf and prefaced by a life of Father Mathew. The appealing and startling beauty of Irish whiskey as a potable spirit appears to lie in the fact that it has never done Ireland any harm. The number of whiskey-sodden persons in Scotland and the number of whiskey-sodden persons in Ireland stand in the ratio of ten to one. In Scotland the red nose and the pimply face abound. Outside that fearsome area

known as the Diamond, there is scarcely a red nose or a pimply face in all Ireland. All the best Scotch whiskey is produced in legitimate distilleries, and all the best Irish whiskey, with due respect, of course, to Dunville, Jamieson et hoc genus, comes out of little places which are unbeknownst to the King's officers of Excise. This, however, is merely extraordinary, paradoxical, and inexplicable, and has nothing whatever to do with ethnology. But to return to the point: whiskey in Scotland is a religion, an institution, a tradition, and a national reproach. Whiskey in Ireland, on the other hand, is an accomplishment, an ornament, a mellowness, a kindness, a simplicity, and a joy for ever. The true Irish people drink it wisely as the Gaul takes his wine. When you see a number of drunken persons in Ireland, you may safely assume that they are Orangemen and of Scotch descent. The Irish of Ireland do not get drunk; which means that they neither royster in bars nor soak alcoholically at home. According to Mr Hussey, Irish whiskey is "vilely adulterated," both by the publicans and "in some of the factories." In support

of this statement he tells the following story: "On one occasion a Killorglin publican was in jail, and his father asked for an interview because he wanted the recipe for manufacturing the special whiskey for Puck Fair. It has been a constant practice to prepare this blend, but the whiskey does not keep many days, as may be gathered from the recipe, which the prisoner without hesitation dictated to his parent:—'A gallon of fresh, fiery whiskey, a pint of rum, a pint of methylated spirit, two ounces of corrosive sublimate, and three gallons of water.'" Which is to suggest that the Irish have no palates, and that like the gentleman who ate fly-papers in mistake for oatcake, they are poison-proof. Frankly, I should be disposed to take Mr Hussey's recipe with great reserve. It is amusing, doubtless, but a chemist would shake his head over it. Practically, the only undesirable drinking which goes on in Ireland proper is done at wakes; but even Mr Hussey admits that wakes are on the decline, and not by any means the occasions for over-indulgence which they once were. It is all very well to visit a county town and

single out half a dozen notorious drunkards with the view of proving that the Irish people are a drunken people. I say that the Irish people in the lump are a sober people, though they may not be teetotallers. I will go further and admit that they have a wonderful appreciation for the wine of the country, and that at times some of them even get hearty. But this is not to say that drink rages in Ireland as it rages in Scotland, or, for that matter, as it rages in the poorer quarters of our English cities. And I believe further that, taking the whiskey of Ireland all round, it is a much sounder and less sophisticated spirit than the bulk of the whiskey consumed in Scotland and England. Mr Hussey assures us that the increase of lunacy in Ireland has been pronounced by the Committee which sat on the question in Dublin to be mainly due, not only to excessive drinking, but to the assimilation of adulterated spirits. With all respect to the conclusions of this Committee, I do not think that those conclusions are borne out by the facts. Lunacy in Ireland is the direct outcome of the almost unthinkable poverty and squalor of the greater part of the

population. When you couple with poverty, want of occupation, a solitary life, and an enervating climate, not to mention the melancholy brooding propensities of the Irish peasant, it is no wonder that lunacy claims many victims. To allege that because a lunatic has been in the habit of consuming a considerable quantity of poteen his lunacy is necessarily due to poteen, seems to me to be begging the question. If you could alleviate the poverty and inaction to which the Irish peasant is condemned from the day of his birth to the day of his death, you would have gone a long way towards eliminating lunacy from Ireland, and at the same time I believe you would find that you had not seriously reduced the consumption of whiskey, the fact being that the consumption per head of the population is reasonable. In this, as in many other respects, Ireland has been grossly misrepresented, both by serious and humorous writers. The humorous writers, indeed, have been the graver offenders. Many of them seem incapable of conceiving the Irish character in any terms but those of hilarious and flagrant alcoholism. It is

a profound mistake, and we shall be helped materially in our endeavours to comprehend and placate our unfortunate sister kingdom, if we dismiss forthwith from our minds the idea that she is utterly and perceptibly given over to inordinate drinking.

CHAPTER V

THE PATHRIOT

IRELAND has produced more patriots than any other country under the sun. The names of them are legion, and from Wolf Tone down to Dr Tanner they have all been men of reasonable parts. O'Connell, Emmett, Butt and Parnell shine out perhaps as the greatest of them. The smaller fry do not require enumeration. But if I mistake not, while it is the fashion to flatter every Irishman who has done anything at all for Ireland with the general title of pathriot, it is only within comparatively recent times that the authentic pathriot has come into being. The fact that in England people are unkind enough to call him an agitator is of small consequence. The pathriot is singularly and peculiarly Irish. There is nothing like him in England, and there never will be anything like him; for he comes like water and like wind he goes.

He begins anywhere—he may be a butcher, a publican, a schoolmaster or a farmer—he attains a seat in the House of Commons, and a certain prominence in the press, and he ends nowhere. Irish editors worship him for a season, then they wax critical of him, then they forget him altogether. Mr Timothy Healy is a good type of the pathriot at his best. He has accomplished great things for Ireland, and achieved for himself a reputation in Parliament for a sort of savage brilliance. But there are not a dozen men in England, Ireland, Scotland or Wales to-day who care twopence where he is, or could tell you what becomes of him when Parliament is not sitting. He will end obscurely, inasmuch as it is the fate of Irish pathriots so to end. As the chief of the pathriots of the less glorious type, who however succeed in making the best of both countries, we may instance Mr T. P. O'Connor. Mr O'Connor is an Irishman and a Nationalist, but he has shaken the dust of Ireland from his feet, and he sits for the Scotland division of Liverpool, and has done himself rather well as a promoter of heterogeneous newspapers in London. With Mr O'Connor, however, we shall

deal fully elsewhere. Only for the sake of symmetry, do not let us forget that he is a pathriot of the finest water. The vital defect in the character of the Irish pathriot, looking at him squarely, is that in recent times at anyrate he has never been a statesman. A pathriot with the proper statesmanlike qualities might, it is true, have been altogether swamped by the frothy eloquence and wild demands of the main body of pathriots. But such a one, if the Irish could only have managed to find him and keep him going, whether in the House of Commons or on English platforms, would in the long run have made a vast difference to her interests. It may be argued that Ireland did actually find a statesman in Mr Gladstone. On the other hand it is abundantly evident that however sincere and admirable Mr Gladstone's proposals for the betterment of the country may have been, they were not based on anything like an exact, or for that matter even a working, knowledge of its necessities and requirements. As for Mr Parnell, it is no disrespect to him to say of him, in full view of his amazing career, that he was not a statesman even in a

small way. His aloofness, haughtiness, and chilliness of temper precluded him from a really effective part or lot in the faction which he led, and ruled with a rod of iron, and, for himself, he had not sufficient spirits and imagination to carve out an independent and statesmanlike policy. Mr Parnell made a great name and no little dust in the world, yet the verdict of history upon him will be that he was neither an O'Connell nor an Isaac Butt, and that he failed to go anything like so far as might have been expected of him. For the rest of the pathriots, the remnant, as it were, of the National party, they do not matter, and they know it. In the House of Commons they are absolutely without other than adventitious power. The English party system happened to afford them certain mechanical advantages of which they are never tired of boasting. Their sarcasms and humours and occasional displays of temper bring them from time to time a passing notoriety. But taking them as a body they are inept, irresponsible, feeble and negligible; constituting indeed a standing monument to the undesirable vagaries which might be looked for in the event of their

being granted that much desired "little place of their own" on College Green. In fine, the Irish pathriot of our own times will not wash. He means well by his country, and well enough by himself, but he has no balance, and is entirely blind to the falsehood of extremes. It is curious to note how easily Ireland is satisfied. In pretty well all matters that concern her closely her standard of requirement is barely middling. She knows how to be grateful to the merest nonentities, and she can bestow reverence and undying fame upon persons who are little removed from mediocrity. The modern pathriot has never risen above the foothills; yet for Ireland he stands upon the pinnacle, and they say Hosanna to him. It is a sign of the times, however, that Erin is beginning to be alive to the fact that in the main the pathriot is just one of those persons with whom she can very well afford to dispense. Vaulting ambition hath rather overleaped itself in the matter of these gentry, and their posturings and screamings and clenchings of the fist are no longer received with altogether unanimous applause. That there is reason in all things is a simple lesson which pathriots who

are not wholly careless of their future will do well to learn. Their well-worn parrot-cries of "tyranny," "oppression," "cowardice," "robbery," "murder," and so forth are become just a trifle stale, flat, and unprofitable. Irishmen are weary of shrieks; they desire a trifle of sobriety and good sense.

CHAPTER VI

ORANGEMEN

In matters Irish it is quite usual to talk of aiming at the manifestly impossible. If we could get rid of the priests, say some, Ireland would be a happy country; but nobody suggests how it is to be done, because everybody knows full well that it cannot be done. And nobody pretends to be quite sure that benefits would result if it were done. For myself, I believe that one of the most salutary things that could be done for Ireland at the present moment would be to get rid of the Orangemen. Though they are, of course, a much older organisation, they occupy in Ireland pretty much the same position as the Passive Resisters occupy in this country. In other words, while they proclaim themselves to be the friends of liberty, they are in reality nothing more nor

less than the friends of intolerance and tyranny.

"A Grand Orange demonstration will be held in Donegal on Tuesday, 12th July 1898. Who fears to speak of Derry, Aughrim, and the Boyne? Papists, stand aside! We conquered you before, and can do so again. Our motto still is: Down with Home Rule, Hurrah for King William, and to Hell with the Pope!"

This is a sample Orange proclamation quoted by Mr M. J. F. M'Carthy in *Five Years in Ireland.* Now seventy-five per cent. of the population of Ireland are Roman Catholics; what is more, they are Roman Catholics of the devoutest and most devoted type. Probably the Orangemen do not number ten per cent. of the population; yet they are allowed to insult the Head of the Roman Church in the grossest manner, with absolute impunity. If any secret society or other body in Ireland were to post a notice in Donegal to-morrow announcing a grand national demonstration, and winding up with some such ejaculatory remark as "To Hell with Mr Balfour," there would be arrests and

terms of imprisonment and howls from every corner of England. It goes without saying that the Pope is not Mr Balfour, and when His Holiness is wished "to Hell" nobody is really a penny the worse. But can it be claimed for a moment that there is either justice or reason in allowing such insults to be placarded in the midst of a Catholic population? Nobody above the level of a Scotch Presbyterian would attempt to justify anything of the kind. It may be that when the Orange lodges were founded they had a use and were necessary for the protection of the Protestant religion against the wiles of Roman Catholicism. At the present moment they serve no purpose whatever that is not essentially evil. In point of fact they are organised centres for the encouragement of bibulous sentiment and the open flaunting of the power of an ill-conditioned minority over a decent and fairly tolerant majority. The Protestant religion in Ireland must be in a distinctly parlous condition if it requires any such backing or any such "protection." The fact is that nothing of the sort is necessary, or believed to be necessary, even by the more bigoted Irish

Protestants. That being so, Orangeism would seem to be ripe for extirpation. If the English Government were as secular as it is commonly held to be, the Orange lodges would have short shrift. It is their supposed connection with religious liberty which shields them from suppression. Yet every Irishman, Protestant or Catholic, knows well that the religious element in Orangeism is little more than pure farce. The entire Orange forces of Ireland could not muster a couple of saints, lay or clerical, to save their lives. At the present time the Orange faction is literally powerless to do anything but create disturbances which are, in effect, street rows of the most vulgar and ill-considered nature. The stoning of Cardinals belongs properly to the same order of sport as the baiting of Jews. Neither pastime would be tolerated for a moment in England.

Why the Northern Irish should be indulged passes comprehension. The majority in Ireland is Green and Catholic as opposed to a tiny minority of Orange and Protestant. The majority has an admitted right to its way in England—why not in Ireland? Much has been said as to the "sinfulness"

and "wickedness" of Mr Gladstone in disestablishing the Irish Church. I am not sure that even the Catholics are quite convinced that Mr Gladstone's action was wise. But one thing is certain, namely, that the disestablishment of the Irish Church was eminently just, having regard to the relative position of religious parties in the country. The suppression of the Orange lodges, or, at anyrate, the penalisation of Orange demonstrations, ought to have followed as a matter of course. There will never be real peace nor content in Ireland till Orangeism is deprived of its present scandalous powers of annoyance, disturbance and tyranny. Toleration on both sides, Catholic and Protestant, is the only hope for a "United Ireland," or for an Ireland that is to work out its own social and political salvation. And you cannot have tolerance where you have an organisation of chartered reactionaries who, in spite of their alleged religious purpose, are little removed, whether in temper or intention, from the common Hooligans of London. The Irish Catholic Church, which, after all, possesses some say over its adherents has, during late years,

done all that lies in its power to prevent collisions between Catholics and Orangemen ; it avoids as far as is possible the occasions of such collision ; it is careful neither to provoke nor challenge, and in practice it literally "turns the other cheek." The Irish Protestant Church is equally anxious for peace and equally assiduous in its efforts to secure it. Yet Orangeism flaunts itself at large and without let or hindrance. It furnishes forth "riots o' Monday" at its own sweet will, and hoots, and mobs, and waves crimson handkerchiefs, and throws stones, and breaks windows and heads to its heart's content. There is really nobody to say it nay. Authority stands by and winks, for is it not the great principle of Protestantism that is being protected? And are not these same Orangemen vigorous and violent anti-Home-Rulers? Herein, indeed, you have the true inwardness of the modern English attitude toward King William's men. The domestic quietude of Ireland and the religious freedom of two-thirds of her population cannot be of the remotest consequence compared with the maintenance of the Union. That Ireland no

longer seeks Home Rule does not matter. Orangeism has severed the Unionists passing well in the day that is just past. Let it reap its reward in the shape of leave and license. It deserves well of England ; who shall raise a finger against it? And, moreover, it is Scotch, and the Scotch are the backbone of Ireland, as of England—manners and morals and all other decent things on one side. As I indicated at the beginning of this chapter, to attempt to rid Ireland of Orangemen were to attempt the impossible. But to deprive Orangeism of English approval and countenance is possible. Break up the lodges, bring to bear on the suppression of Orange demonstrations and Orange disturbances one tithe of the forces you brought to bear against Irish nationalism, and you will have gone a great way towards removing the last obstacles to the peace and contentment of the Irish people as a body.

CHAPTER VII

THE LOW SCOTCH

I HAVE no desire to offer in the present pages a re-hash of a former work of mine, which is said to have provoked the Scotch to the point of laughter. But I do desire to assert that, in my humble opinion, it is the Scotch, or alien population of Ireland, which has been at the root of Ireland's principal troubles throughout the past century. Ulster may be a fine kingdom, the wealthiest, most industrious, and the wisest and happiest in the country, if you like. Yet it is Ulster that bars the way in all matters that make for the real good of Ireland. Every proper Irishman knows this, and Ulstermen will be at no pains to deny it. Rather are they disposed to glory in it and to brag about it. Ireland, they will tell you, is their country. It is they who have made it, they who have

saved it, they who have enriched, beautified and adorned it. They point to the linen industry and to the shipbuilding industry; they crack about Belfast and Portadown, and about "eminent Ulstermen in every walk of life." There would be no Ireland at all if it were not for themselves. They rule Ireland. What Ireland wants she may have, if it pleases Ulster. What Ireland does not want she must have, if Ulster so much as nod. That, at anyrate, is the view of Ulster, the view of the thrifty, douce Scotch bodies whose fathers got gifts of other people's lands from James I. of England and VI. of Scotland, and whose sons go up and down and to and fro upon the earth, calling themselves "Irishmen of Scotch descent." There are no Irishmen of Scotch descent. And Ulstermen are not Irishmen unless their descent be Irish. Failing this, they are simply interlopers, or, at best, colonists and plantation men, and they had best put the fact in their pipes and smoke it. Nobody can deny that it was a bad day for Ireland when they came grabbing and grubbing to her shores, just as it was a bad day for England when she "took up" with

them. They got Ulster for nothing, and they have kept it for "that same." They have lived and waxed fat on Irish plunder, and the whole force of English legislation has been directed towards maintaining them in their place, fostering their projects, pampering and propitiating them, and "protecting" them against the wicked, degraded, unreasonable Irish outside. Nor have they been content to confine their greedy attention to their own proper "kingdom," which is not theirs. Where the carcase is, there will the vulture be; and where there is a soft job, or obvious pickings, there will you find a Scotchman. So that throughout Ireland, Scotchmen have been scattered wherever the Government could find a place for one. There is scarcely an office, sub-office, or sub-deputy office worth the having in all Ireland which has not been made the perquisite of a Protestant Scotchman. Even the Congested Districts Board employ Scotch factors, and Thom's Almanac is little more than a catalogue of Scotch patronymics. And the pride and insolence and unfairness of them! From a booklet called *The Scot in Ulster*, written by a

Scotchman, and published, if you please, by Blackwood's of Edinburgh, I take the following: "Their English and Scotch origin seems to me to give to the men of Ulster an unalienable right to protest, as far as they are concerned, against the policy of separation from Great Britain to which the Irish, with the genius for nicknames which they possess, at present give the name of Home Rule." Could sophistry, craft, subtlety, disingenuousness, or the Scotch genius for cunning misrepresentation go further? To say that when the Irish people have said Home Rule they meant separation, is to promulgate a deliberate and wily untruth. The Irish people proper invariably mean what they say, no more and no less. Home Rule never meant more nor less to the Irish than "a parliament on college green." It was the Scotch, and the Scotch alone, who set up the cry of "separation" for a bugbear and a bogey wherewith to frighten the timorous English ruler into stubborn acquiescence in the Scotch view of Irish affairs. Yet here we have a Scotchman assuring us in cold print that Home Rule is merely an Irish "nickname" for "separation." I note with

considerable satisfaction, however, that, as Scotchmen will, the author of *The Scot in Ulster* proceeds religiously to give away the whole Scotch-Irish question. "For centuries," says he, "the Scot had been wont to wander forth over Europe in search of *adventure.* [The italic is ours.] As a rule, he turned his steps where fighting was to be had, *and the pay for killing was reasonably good.* [Again the italics are ours.] . . . These Scots who had flocked from Leith, or Crail, or Berwick to seek fortune, in peace or war, on the Continent of Europe were mostly the young and adventurous, for whom the old home life had become too narrow. *They took with them little save their own stout hearts and their national long heads.* [These, too, are our italics.]. . . The time arrived at last, however, when war with England ceased, and internal strife became less bloody, and Scotland began to be too small for her rapidly-growing population, *for in those days food did not necessarily come where there were mouths to consume it.* [Italics—of our own—which famine-stricken Ireland may fittingly ponder.] Then the Scots, true to the race from which they sprung—for 'Norman, and

Saxon, and Dane are we' [think of it!*] —began to go forth, like the northern hordes in days of yore, the women and the children along with the bread-winners, and crossed the seas, and settled in new lands, and were 'fruitful and multiplied and replenished the earth,' until the globe is circled round with colonies which are of our blood, and which love and cherish the old 'land of the mountain and the flood.'" [Tut, tut!] And now mark us: "It was in the beginning of the seventeenth century that the first of these swarms crossed the narrowest of the seas which surround Scotland; it went out from the Ayrshire and Galloway ports, and settled in the north of Ireland. The numbers which went were large. They left Scotland at a time when she was deeply moved by the great Puritan revival. They took with them their Scottish character and their Scottish Calvinism. [Clearly they had both hands full!] They founded the Scottish colony in Ulster. Thus it comes to pass 'That the foundation of

* In point of fact the Scotch are neither Norman, Saxon, Dane nor good red-herring, but sheer Scotch.

Ulster society is Scottish. It is the solid granite on which it rests.' [Glory be!] The history of this Scottish colony seems worth telling, for it is a story of which any Scotsman at home or abroad may be proud. [Where is my crimson handkerchief?] Its early history is *quaint* and *interesting:* [our italics] there is much *suffering* and *oppression* in the story of the succeeding years, [our italics] but there are flashes of brightness to relieve the gloom. *The men which this race of Scotsmen has produced are worthy of the parent stock; the contribution which this branch of the Scottish nation has made to the progress of civilisation proves that it has not forgotten the old ideals; the portion of Ireland which these Scotsmen HOLD is so prosperous and contented that it permits our statesmen to forget that it is part of that most 'distressful' country.*" I venture to thank Heaven and St Patrick that the statements we have last italicised and the word we have put in capital letters embody the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Examine them, O sons of Erin, and take heed that You are the people, and that the Scotch are but the sons of Belial and Astoreth. What

has holy Ireland to do with these vapours, these swaggerings, these smitings of righteous breasts? Who be the grubby, grimy, gallowayan, grasping, governmental hucksters that so by implication and innuendo contemn You, the proper and legitimate owners of Ulster? Ask of the winds, which far around strew Scotchmen and the devil on the fair places of the earth. You are innocent to put up with it. You fought the landlords and beat them hollow. "We conquered you before, and can do so again!" Be done with this Scotch obsession. Good can come out of Ireland and Irishmen, as well as out of Ulster and Scotchmen. Lo, that green island is yours, not theirs. Seven-tenths of it are in your hands to do with as you will. "There is not, perhaps, another country on the face of the globe where more good, solid work is waiting to be done, where greater capacities lie dormant, yet where trifling of all kinds so abounds." That is the verdict of an Irishman and an Irish Catholic upon you. In sober truth you groan, as England groans, under the Scotch superstition. Nobody can be prosperous in Ireland save Scotchmen. Nobody can manufacture but Scotchmen,

nobody can farm but Scotchmen. The view is entirely false. Encourage it no longer; remember who you are, and make an end of trifling.

CHAPTER VIII

PRIESTCRAFT

Are there too many priests in Ireland? Yes. Is Dublin "black with them"? Yes. Do they appear to be as frequent on the country side as crows? Yes. Are they extorting from the Irish people money which is sorely needed for secular purposes? Yes. Here you have four pertinent questions, which invariably crop up whenever Ireland is discussed, together with the average answers to them. "It is the priests!" cry both well and ill informed. According to the latest critic—who it seems once occupied the somewhat superfluous position of "literary-editor of the *Daily Mail*"—"one of the heaviest drags upon the life of Ireland is the religious vocation. The monasteries and nunneries prosper and increase, choking and interfering with the circulation of labour and of industry in the

country." Also, "it is my profound conviction that a large proportion of the present misery of Ireland is not only bound up with, but is actually a result of the country's religion." Also, "the houses of the people are so indecently poor and small; the houses of the Church are so indecently rich and large. Out of the dirt and decay they rise, proud and ugly and substantial, as though to inform the world that at least one thing is not dying and despondent, but keeps its loins girded and its lamps trimmed." This, roughly, is the indictment. Appended are some of the figures upon which it is based. Mr Michael M'Carthy, himself a Catholic, says, "A cardinal, 3 archbishops, 25 bishops, 2 mitred abbots, and 2722 secular priests, together with a host of regular priests of all the different Orders, such as Jesuits, Franciscans, Vincentians, Holy Ghost, Carmelites, Passionists, Augustinians, Mary Immaculate, Dominicans, Cistercians, Marists, Redemptorists and so forth, all of whom flourish in Ireland—such is the force which constitutes the formidable clerical army of the Catholic Church in Ireland, and its auxiliary forces

are the numerous Orders of nuns, Christian brothers, lay brothers attached to the regular Orders, and so forth; together with the great body of Catholic National teachers, male and female, who are under the control of the priests, and teach catechism in the churches; the parish priests, as managers of the parochial National Schools, having the power of dismissing the teachers." "May it not be said of this great organisation," adds Mr M'Carthy, "that 'it is on a scale such as few nations would be able and willing to afford'?"

To dispose of the indictment first, we may quote a little further from the author of it. He writes: "So far as they are individually concerned, they [the priests] are in many cases the true friends of the people. They help them in their affairs, settle their disputes, claim for them their rights, comfort them in their sorrows, admonish, encourage, cherish and watch over them. This is at the best. At the worst they are hard and cruel, selfish and unjust, over-eating and over-drinking—a grotesque and monstrous company. But these are the minority; and on the whole the priests

perform the duties of a dreary life as well as could be expected of a narrow and half-educated class of men." Now, if this means anything at all it means that the person responsible for it believes that the Catholic priesthood of Ireland is socially useful and necessary. The minority of its members are "hard and cruel, selfish and unjust," which is true of the minority in other priesthoods besides the Irish. But the majority "are the true friends of the people, helping them in their affairs, settling their disputes, claiming for them their rights, comforting them in their sorrows, admonishing, encouraging, cherishing and watching over them." How the majority manages to accomplish so much, if it is composed of a "narrow and half-educated class of men," passes comprehension; but we have the fact that it manages it, which is satisfactory. Further, our friend omits, in the plenitude of his deprecation, to mention that the "religious vocation" in Ireland is by no means the softest, easiest and rosiest of vocations, amounting indeed to a species of spiritual and physical servitude of the severest kind; and that

the religious Orders, so far as they may be represented in "monasteries and nunneries," are self-supporting, subsisting austerely on the labour of their own hands, and devoting themselves to the most arduous charitable and educational work without fee or reward. And as to "indecently rich" houses of the Church, such an epithet as applied to the Catholic churches of Ireland is quite preposterous. There is no "indecently rich" Catholic church in all Ireland. That there are Protestant churches with incomes amounting to a comfortable number of hundreds per annum and not half a dozen souls in the way of a *bona-fide* congregation may be granted; but the Catholic church with as little as £100 a year and no congregation does not exist. Neither can it be maintained that the Irish Catholic churches are "indecently rich" in the matters of architecture or adornment — the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault, gorgeous windows, splendid altars and vessels, or other elaborate fitments, being the exception and not the rule. Indeed, our author himself complains that "the ugliness of the churches in Ireland is revolting to the healthy sense,"

and that the "decorations" which "enshrine the mysteries of the Mass" are "cheap" and "hideous," so that on his own showing "indecently rich" somehow fails to fit in.

Now for the figures. The population of Ireland at the last census was, roughly, 4,500,000, and the population of England and Wales 32,500,000. In Ireland there are 3 archbishops and 25 bishops, without reckoning Episcopalians. In England and Wales there are 2 archbishops, 33 bishops, 8 assistant bishops, and 27 bishops suffragan; without reckoning 1 Roman Catholic archbishop and 15 bishops, and the chiefs of the Wesleyan Methodist, Methodist New Connexion, Primitive Methodist, Baptist, Congregational, Free Church, Salvation Army, Church Army, Calvinistic, Unitarian, Catholic Apostolic, and a host of other bodies. In the matter of hierarchy, therefore, Ireland is not exactly overburdened, even if it be admitted that she should take her pattern from England. Then, as against Ireland's 2722 secular priests, England boasts the amazing total of 23,000 beneficed and unbeneficed clergy, plus from 7000 to 10,000 Nonconformist ministers and 20,000 Salvation Army

"Officers." So that, at a moderate computation, while there is one priest or minister of religion to every 500 of the population in England, there is only one priest to every 800 of the population of Ireland. The ratios indicated may not be exact, but they are based on Whitaker and pretty near the mark. Taken another way the position amounts to this. In an English townlet of from 3000 to 4000 population you will find, as a rule, a couple of vicars, three or four curates, a Wesleyan minister, a Baptist minister, a Congregational minister, a Catholic priest and a couple of Salvationists. In an Irish townlet of the same size you have possibly six Catholic priests and a solitary Episcopalian. Dreadful, is it not? Being mainly of one sort, as it were, the priests of Ireland appear to be much thicker on the ground than the clergy and ministers of England. But it is nothing more nor less than an optical illusion—one of those many illusions upon which judgments about Ireland are usually formed. As to places of worship, it has been charged against the Irish Church that she builds too much. "The traveller walking or driving across the

wastes of that empty land," says the author previously quoted, "will nearly always find that the first thing to break the monotony of the horizon is a spire or tower ; and when he arrives at the desolate little huddle of cabins or cottages that makes a town he will find, dominating and shadowing it, the Catholic chapel. Sometimes, indeed, the buildings are poor and rough : but these are becoming fewer and fewer, and are now gradually, even in the poorest districts, being replaced by structures strangely out of keeping with the ruinous poverty around them. The last few years have seen in Ireland a great activity in the building of these chapels ; the very slight increase which has taken place in the standard of living has made the movement possible." Assuming this to be a just statement of the case, is it not equally true of our own England? Has not the building of churches, chapels and general places of worship proceeded as merrily in the poorer districts of the larger English towns during the past decade as ever it did in Ireland? Where can you turn in England without seeing a spire? Where is the townlet, or suburb, or slum that has not got

its brand new red-brick Anglican church, or its ruddy, stone-fronted Bethesda, or its castellated, prison-like Salvation Barracks? Furthermore, the English temples are seldom half full. You have to provide a sort of religious variety entertainment, with services of song, magic-lantern sermons, brass bands and the like to get the people in at all; whereas the churches of Ireland are full to overflowing, and the congregations do not require the lure of a steady succession of novelties, or, indeed, any departure from the prescribed offices.

The fact is that the Irish Church and the Irish priesthood have been cruelly and brutally maligned by pretty well every sand-blind writer and carpet-bagging politician who has visited the country. We have blamed upon the Church poverty and distress and ignorance and squalor which are the direct outcome of bad government and not of priestly cupidity. We have said in effect to our Irish brethren, "You are too indigent to have a religion, or churches, or spiritual guidance. Every penny you pay for these things is sheer waste of money, particularly as it keeps our rents down. And inasmuch

as you are of one Church and one mind—which is a thing unthinkable in this free and enlightened England—you are slaves and soulless." But the Church of Ireland goes on its way, and in the words of Archbishop Croke, which by the way Mr M'Carthy, Irish Catholic, quotes with a sneer, "[The Irish priesthood] holds possession of the people's hearts to a degree unknown to any other priesthood in the world."

CHAPTER IX

MORALS

For all practical purposes, and in spite of everything that can be brought against her, Ireland may be justly described as a moral country, even as Scotland is essentially an immoral country and England a middling one. It is true that we live in a time when morality has ceased to matter and virtue is become a reproach. The world has divided itself into two camps—the one scientific, the other artistic. Neither of them professes the smallest concern with morals. We have invented new and most blessedly euphonious names for the old wickednesses. Robbery is called competition; lying, smartness; effrontery, pluck; cowardice, courtesy; avarice, thrift; cunning, wisdom, and so forth. And when it pleases us we can e'en find hard names for the Christian graces. The faith of Ireland, for example, has been dis-

covered to be fanaticism, bigotry, paganism, materialism, idolatry, and I know not what besides; her charity is credited to her for pusillanimity; her patience and long-suffering for indolence and apathy. What wonder, therefore, that the very chastity upon which her national morals are based should at length have been assailed. Hearken to the inspired ex-literary editor of the *Daily Mail*:—

"The crowning achievement of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, the thing which is unparalleled elsewhere in the world, is the complete and awful (*sic*) chastity of the people. There is many a country district where that incident which in England and Scotland is regarded merely as a slight misfortune is unknown and unimagined by the people. I have seen a man, the father of a grown-up family, blanch and hold up his hands at the very name of it, as though even to breathe it were a blasphemy. And this, in itself a good thing, has reached such a point that it has become a dreadful evil. It is no longer a virtue, it is a blight."

And the dear young gentleman goes on to assert that it is the chastity of the Irish people which fills Irish lunatic asylums, and

exclaims dithyrambically: "There may be no bastards in Ireland, but a hundred bastards would, in Ireland's peculiar circumstances, be a more gracious and healthy sign than one lunatic." Here surely is wisdom of the highest and most delightful type. We have already seen that the increase of lunacy in Ireland has been pronounced, by the committee which sat on the question in Dublin, to be mainly due to excessive drinking and the assimilation of adulterated spirits. The committee may not have been right; for my own part I believe it was decidedly wrong. But it delivered itself of no pronouncement which warrants either the scientific or the ribald to associate Irish lunacy with chastity, rather than with drink or other predispositions. If chastity fills the lunatic asylums how come the Irish priesthood to be at large, or for that matter the women of the English middle classes, and honest women all the world over? And if bastardy be a preventative of lunacy, how comes it that in Scotland you have as many lunatics as you have in Ireland, and about ten times as many bastards? Can it be that of two evils Caledonia, with her customary

shrewdness, has chosen both? The suggestion is as ridiculous as it is abominable, and as scandalous as it is malicious. Even in the sense which our *Daily Mail* young person may be presumed to have in mind, it is the direct opposite of chastity that helps to people lunatic asylums, and never chastity itself, "blight" or no blight. I mention this wholly unprecedented incursion into sophistry only by way of showing what the astute censors of Ireland really can do when they set themselves to the work; and although I have no proof on the subject I should like to wager that the author of it is an Orangeman and of Scotch extraction. It is no compliment to Ireland to say that, in theory at anyrate, her morals are entirely sound. In other words Ireland believes in virtue and goodness, even though she may not always succeed in living up to her tenet, and though, for reasons which need not be discussed, she may be possessed of primal dispositions to the sorriest evil.

And it is the solemn and deplorable fact that there does exist in the Irish blood a tendency towards wickedness of the most ghastly and inhuman character. A

case in point is afforded by the frightful doing to death of Mrs Bridget Cleary at Ballyvadlea in 1895. The following account of this tragedy is abridged from Mr M'Carthy's *Five Years in Ireland*:—

"Mrs Cleary fell ill on Wednesday, the 13th of March, and sent for a doctor and a priest. The priest saw her in the afternoon. She was in bed, and 'she did not converse with him except as a priest, and her conversation was quite coherent and intelligible.' The doctor also saw her, thought her illness slight, prescribed for her and left. . . . On the morning of Thursday the 14th Father Ryan 'was called to see Mrs Cleary again, but he told the messenger that having administered the last rites of the Church on the previous day there was no need to see her again so soon.' . . . William Simpson, a near neighbour of the Clearys, living only 200 yards off, accompanied by his wife, left their own house between nine and ten o'clock on Thursday evening to visit Mrs Cleary, having heard she was ill. When they arrived close to Cleary's house they met Mrs Johanna Burke, accompanied by her little daughter, Katie Burke, and inquired from her how Mrs Cleary was. Mrs Burke, herself a first cousin of Mrs

Cleary's, said, 'They are giving her herbs, got from Ganey, over the mountain, and nobody will be let in for some time.' These four people then remained outside the house for some time, waiting to be let in. Simpson heard cries inside, and a voice shouting, 'Take it, you b——, you old faggot, or we will burn you!' The shutters of the windows were closed and the door locked. After some time the door was opened and from within shouts were heard: 'Away she go! Away she go!' As Simpson afterwards learned, the door had been opened to permit the fairies to leave the house, and the adjuration was addressed to those 'supernatural' beings.

"In the confusion Simpson, his wife, Mrs Burke, and her little daughter, worked their way into the house. . . . Simpson saw four men—John Dunne, described as an old man, Patrick Kennedy, James Kennedy, and William Kennedy, all young men, 'big black-haired Tipperary peasants,' brothers of Mrs Burke and first cousins of Mrs Cleary, 'holding Bridget Cleary down on the bed. She was on her back, and had a nightdress on her. Her husband, Michael Cleary, was standing by the bedside.'

"Cleary called for a liquid, and said, 'Throw it on her.' Mary Kennedy, an old woman, mother of Mrs Burke, and of

all the other Kennedys present, brought the liquid. Michael Kennedy held the saucepan. The liquid was dashed over Bridget Cleary several times. Her father, Patrick Boland, was present. William Ahearne, described as a delicate youth of sixteen, was holding a candle. Bridget Cleary was struggling, vainly, alas! on the bed, crying out, 'Leave me alone.' Simpson then saw her husband give her some liquid with a spoon; she was held down by force by the men for ten minutes afterwards, and one of the men kept his hand on her mouth. The men at each side of the bed kept her body swinging about the whole time, and shouting, 'Away with you! Come back, Bridget Boland, in the name of God!' She screamed horribly. They cried out, 'Come home, Bridget Boland.' From these proceedings Simpson gathered that 'they thought Bridget Cleary was a witch,' or had a witch in her, whom they 'endeavoured to hunt out of the house by torturing her body.'

"Some time afterwards she was lifted out of the bed by the men, or rather demons, and *carried to the kitchen fire* by John Dunne, Patrick, William, and James Kennedy. Simpson saw red marks on her forehead, and some one present said they had to 'use the red poker on her to make her take the medicine.' The four men named held poor

Bridget Cleary, in her night-dress, over the fire; and Simpson 'could see her body resting on the bars of the grate where the fire was burning.' While this was being done, we learn that the Rosary was said. Her husband put her some questions at the fire. He said if she did not answer her name three times they would burn her. She, poor thing, repeated her name three times after her father and her husband!

"'Are you Bridget Boland, wife of Michael Cleary, in the name of God?'"

"'I am Bridget Boland, daughter of Patrick Boland, in the name of God.'

"Simpson said they showed feverish anxiety to get her answers before twelve o'clock.

"They were all speaking and saying, *Do you think it is her that is there?* And the answer would be 'Yes,' and they were all delighted.

"After she had answered the questions they put her back into bed, and 'the women put a clean chemise on her,' which Johanna Burke 'aired for her.' She was then asked to identify each person in the room, and did so successfully. The Kennedys left the house at one o'clock 'to attend the wake of Cleary's father,' who was lying dead that night at Killenaule! Dunne and Ahearne left at two o'clock. It was six o'clock on the morning of the 15th, 'about daybreak,'

when the Simpsons and Johanna Burke left the house after those hellish orgies. There had been thirteen people present in Cleary's house on that night, yet no one outside the circle of the perpetrators themselves seems to have known, or cared, if they knew, of the devilish goings-on in that labourer's cottage.

"At one time during that horrible night the poor victim said, 'The police are at the window. Let ye mind me now!' But there were no police there.

"We now come to the third day, Friday, 15th of March. Six o'clock on that morning found Michael Cleary, the chief actor, Patrick Boland and Mary Kennedy in the house with the poor victim, when the two Simpsons and the two Burkes were leaving. Simpson says, 'Cleary then went for the priest, as he wanted to have Mass said in the house to banish the evil spirits.' This brings us back again to the Rev. Father Ryan, who says, 'At seven o'clock on Friday morning I was next summoned. Michael Cleary asked me to come to his house and celebrate Mass: his wife *had had a very bad night.*' . . . Father Ryan arrived at the cottage at a quarter past eight, and *said Mass* in that awful front room where poor Bridget Cleary *was lying in bed.* . . .

"'She seemed more nervous and excited

than on Wednesday,' he says, and adds, 'her husband and father were present before Mass began, but I could not say who was there during its celebration.' He had no conversation with Michael Cleary 'as to any incident which had occurred,' because he suspected nothing. 'When leaving,' he said, 'I asked Cleary was he giving his wife the medicine the doctor ordered? Cleary answered that he *had no faith in it.* I told him that it should be administered. Cleary replied that *people may have some remedy of their own that could do more good than doctors' medicine.*' Yet, Father Ryan left the house 'suspecting nothing.' 'Had he any suspicion of foul play or witchcraft,' he says, 'he should have at once *absolutely refused to say Mass* in the house, and have *given information to the police.*' . . .

"After Father Ryan had said his Mass and left, Mrs Cleary remained in bed. Simpson saw her there at midday and never saw her afterwards. His excuse for his presence and non-interference on Thursday night is that 'the door was locked, and he could not get out.' We find the names of still more people mentioned as having visited her this day. She seems, judging from the number of visitors, to have been extremely popular. Johanna Burke seems to have been in the house the greater part of this day. At one

time she tells how Cleary came up to the bedside and handed his wife a canister, and said there was £20 in it. She, poor creature, took it, tied it up, 'and told her husband to take care of it, that he would not know the difference till he was without it.' She was 'in her right mind, only frightened at everything.'

"At length the night fell upon the scene; and, at eight o'clock, Cleary, who seems to have ordered all the other actors about as if they were hypnotised, sent Johanna Burke and her little daughter Katie for 'Thomas Smith and David Hogan.' Smith says, 'We all went to Cleary's, and found Michael Cleary, Mary Kennedy, Johanna Meara, Pat Leahy, and Pat Boland in the bedroom.' The husband had a bottle in his hand, and said to the poor bewildered wife, 'Will you take this now, as Tom Smith and David Hogan are here? In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!' Tom Smith, a man who said 'he had known her always since she was born,' then inquired what was in the bottle, and Cleary told him it was holy water. Poor Bridget Cleary said 'Yes,' and she took it. She had to say, before taking it, 'In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,' which she did. Smith and Hogan then left the bedside and 'went and sat at the fire.' Cleary told them

that his wife, 'as she had company, was going to get up.' She actually left her bed, put on 'a frock and shawl,' and came to the kitchen fire. The talk turned upon *bishogues*, or witchcraft and charms. Smith remained there till twelve o'clock, and then left the house, leaving Michael Cleary (husband), Patrick Boland (father), Mary Kennedy (aunt), Patrick, James, and William Kennedy (cousins), Johanna Burke, and her little daughter Katie (also cousins), behind him in the house. Thomas Smith never saw Bridget Cleary after that. According to Johanna Burke, they continued 'talking about fairies,' and poor Bridget Cleary, sitting there by the fire in her frock and shawl, wan and terrified, had said to her husband, 'Your mother used to go with the fairies; that is why you think I am going with them.'

"'Did my mother tell you that?' exclaimed Cleary.

"'She did. That she gave two nights with them,' replied she. . . .

"Johanna Burke then says that she made tea and 'offered Bridget Cleary a cup.' But Cleary jumped up, and getting 'three bits of bread and jam,' said she would 'have to eat them before she could take a sup.' He asked her as he gave her each bit, 'Are you Bridget Cleary, wife of Michael Cleary, in

the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?' The poor, desolate young woman answered twice and swallowed two pieces. We all know how difficult it is, when wasted by suffering and excited by fear, to swallow a bit of dry bread without a drop of liquid to soften it. It, in fact, was the task set to those in the olden days who had to undergo the 'ordeal by bread.' How many of them, we are told, failed to accomplish it! Poor Bridget Cleary failed now at the third bit presented to her by the demon who confronted her. She could not answer the third time.

"He 'forced her to eat the third bit.' He threatened her, 'If you won't take it, down you go!' He flung her to the ground, put his knee on her chest, and one hand on her throat, forcing the bit of bread and jam down her throat.

"'Swallow it, swallow it. Is it down? Is it down?' he cried.

"The woman Burke says she said to him, 'Mike, let her alone, don't you see it is Bridget that is in it,' and explains, 'he suspected it was a fairy and not his wife.'

"Let Burke now tell how the hellish murder was accomplished: 'Michael Cleary stripped his wife's clothes off, except her chemise, and got a lighted stick out of the fire, and held it near her mouth. My mother (Mary Kennedy),

brothers (Patrick, James, and William Kennedy), and myself *wanted to leave*, but Cleary said he had the key of the door, and the door would not be opened till he got his wife back.'

"*They were crying in the room* and wanting to get out. This crowd in the room crying, while Cleary was killing their first cousin in the kitchen.

"'I saw Cleary throw lamp-oil on her. When she was burning, she turned to me' (imagine that face of woe!) 'and called out, "Oh, Han, Han!" I endeavoured to get out for the peelers. My brother William went up into the other room and fell in a weakness, and my mother threw Easter water over him. *Bridget Cleary was all this time burning on the hearth*, and the house was full of smoke and smell. I had to go up to the room, I could not stand it. Cleary then came up into the room where we were and took away a large sack bag. He said, "Hold your tongue, Hannah, it is not Bridget I am burning, You will soon see her go up into the chimney." My brothers, James and William, said, "Burn her if you like, but give us the key and let us get out." While she was burning, Cleary screamed out, "*She is burned now. God knows I did not mean to do it.*" When I looked down into the other room again, *I saw the remains* of Bridget

Cleary lying on the floor on a sheet. She was lying on *her face and her legs turned upwards*, as if they had contracted in burning. She was dead and burned.'"

There is nothing which quite parallels the foregoing in the whole history of crime. At least a dozen persons, male and female, had knowledge of what was going on in that dreadful household over three days. Not one of them had bowels of compassion, not one of them lifted a little finger in the victim's behalf. The majority of them were her blood relations, all of them were Catholics, not one of them but could have informed the priest, the doctor or the police of what was taking place had he or she been so minded. But the devilish poison raging in the blood of the woman's husband raged also in their veins. They stood fascinated in the presence of superstitions which they had drawn in with their mother's milk. They believed in their hearts that Cleary and themselves were righteously, if terribly, occupied. They said the Rosary. And they did all things in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost!

CHAPTER X

PRETTY WOMEN

The women of England, not to say of Scotland, have of late years lain under the reproach that they are ceasing to be possessed of the fatal gift of beauty. I am well aware that there is not a reviewer exercising his calling between Land's End and John o' Groats who will not profess to foam at the mouth on the strength of this statement. Yet the fact remains that ugliness is rapidly becoming the common heritage of English women and Scotch women alike. There is an old superstition, not of course tolerable to the minds of the smart people of to-day, that wickedness, or, not to put too fine a point upon it, ugliness of temperament is calculated gradually to induce ugliness of physique. Without going into the question of the general wickedness of Anglo-Saxon femininity, we may put it down for a

scientific fact that the beauty of them is wearing away—let us hope to the land of the leal. In those remarkably æsthetic organs which sell fifty process-block portraits per week for sixpence, we are treated continually to what the editors take for types of English beauty. You pay your sixpence and you open your hot-pressed beauty-show. On the first page—that is, of course, after the advertisements—you have a speaking presentment of something with elaborate hair and an inexhaustible fund of torso which, frankly, might pass very well for a sign to a public-house called "The Bald-faced Stag." Beneath you read in capital letters "Miss or Mrs So and So—The Famous Beauty." No woman in England apparently is allowed to know whether she be beautiful or not until either Mr Keble Howard Bell or Mr J. M. Bulloch has so labelled her; Bell and Bulloch being, of course, the only possible judges of feminine beauty England possesses. In the politest circles it is quite dangerous to praise a woman's good looks without reference to the files of *The Sketch* and *The Tatler*. A certain nobleman, however, is

understood to have earned something of a reputation for himself as connoisseur by openly avowing his contempt for both sheets, and surreptitiously swotting up the picture pages of the *Daily Mirror*. This, however, like the *Daily Mirror*, is probably neither here nor there. The solemn fact remains that the beauty of England's fairest daughters and Scotland's bonniest lasses alike, has become a doubtful quantity. Any person who is troubled with qualms on the subject need only visit a Court, or the Opera, or Messrs Peter Robinson's, or an A.B.C. shop, or a mothers' meeting. Hard faces, bleary eyes, saw teeth, humpy shoulders, and an undignified gait, not to mention greasy complexions, scanty hair, bony hands and knock knees, are the rule and not the exception among English womankind. We have scarcely a beauty left, even at the Gaiety Theatre. In fact, leaving out the ravishing pictures of the illustrated press, there are really only two beautiful women in England, and both of these are married to reviewers. Now I say and maintain that any male person, possessed of an eye for the charms of what is commonly called the

opposite sex, will find that in Ireland the decay of female beauty has not yet commenced. Whether he be in Dublin or in Cork, in Sligo or in Limerick, pretty women take his vision—as the daffodils take the winds of March—at every corner. In fine, it may be said without exaggeration that if Ireland possesses a characteristic which renders her entirely different from the countries to which, on the face of it, she displays a sort of second hand, tumble-down resemblance, it is the prettiness of her women. I take it for granted that this trait has been commented upon by other travellers; but I do not think that it has heretofore been in any sense properly impressed upon the public mind. It is generally understood among artists that Irish women have delicate hands and an eye with a sparkle about it. Irish poets, in more or less halting English verse, have done their best to indicate that Irish women are, to say the least of it, worth looking at. But I am not aware that on the whole the literature about Ireland insists, to anything like a reasonable degree, on the beauty of Irish women. If the present work were

from the "exquisite" pen of Mr Arthur Symons, our failure adequately to portray the beauty of Erin's daughters would, no doubt, be counterbalanced by the insertion of a selection of half-tone portraits of representative specimens. As it is we are compelled to admit that words fail us, and that, even if we cared to employ them, the process-block makers would fail us also.

It may be said roughly, that the beauty of an Irish woman, while quite tangible and perfect to the vision, is an elusive matter when one comes to cold type. The Anglo-Saxon beauty can be hit off in words, quite as handily as she can be hit off in paint. What she amounts to as a rule is pink and white, and yellow hair, or mouse-coloured hair, and a genteel pallidity. But in Ireland all this is different, beauty of a witching and almost eerie quality is a commonplace throughout the country. An Irishman will speak to you of "the red-haired woman," or "that shlip of a girl," when he means pieces of loveliness that Titian might have given his eye teeth for a sight of. In France at the present moment there is an artist who is understood to be making a

fortune by drawing pretty faces. He could find more subjects for his pencil in a day in Dublin than he could find in a month in Paris. For this information I make no charge. Even Mr Gibson, who appears to have invented a "girl" of his own, might do very well out of the green country. Mr Gibson's young lady is believed to typify the fairest that the United States of America can boast. At times, and when Mr Gibson is at his best, she is undoubtedly a young woman of prepossessing appearance. That she is also a truly American type may be taken for granted. There are plenty of women in Ireland, however, who come quite up to the Gibson girl standard, and for that matter beat it. In journeying through the country I have been struck continually by the remarkable facial resemblance which exists between the Irish and the American people. In an Irish railway train you see faces which at once give you the impression that you are at the Hotel Cecil. The high cheek bones and lank shaven jaw of the full-blooded American are here in great force, and it is only when their possessors open their mouths that you can tell the difference.

Of course, the thing is accounted for by the fact that a very considerable proportion of the population of America is Irish, and that for a hundred years Ireland has been sending her best blood to those states.

Besides being comely, the Irish women have the advantage of what one may term an individual beauty. In England you might rake together twenty beautiful blondes and twenty pretty brunettes, and discover that they were merely blondes and brunettes and nothing more. That is to say the blondes might readily pass for sisters, and so might the brunettes, both sorts lacking the ultimate gift of individuality. Irish women are different—indeed you may safely say of them that they are all pretty and all different. They never repeat their beauty, there is nothing of the white rabbit or puss, puss, puss about them, and consequently they do not bore you. As most things have a cause it seems possible that there are reasons for the beauty of Irish womanhood. For myself I should be disposed to ascribe it to the circumstance that the average Irish woman, be she rich or poor, leads the life which a woman was intended

to lead by the order of things, namely, the domestic life. Irish women are not without the wit to know that they are beautiful; they have an armory of feminine allurements, and wit enough to handle them with skill, and they cannot be considered insensible to the fripperies which all women love. But they do not make gaiety and ostentation the aim and end of their existence, and they do not shirk the plain duties of womanhood. In Ireland, though the women of the poorer classes have to work in the fields and undertake tasks which by good rights should be done by men, there is absolutely no third sex. The manly woman, the emancipated woman, and the impertinent flat-chested typewriter banger, which so infest Great Britain, are unknown. Even the Irish sportswoman—and, as everybody knows, she is pretty numerous—retains her womanliness in a way that is quite beyond the horsey or doggy woman of the Shires. So that in one respect at least Ireland may be reckoned something of a paradise.

CHAPTER XI

THE LONDON IRISH

The Irishman in London appears to lose a great deal of his lustre. If you wish to see him at his best in this Metropolis you must go to the Bar. If you wish to see him at his worst you must go to the House of Commons. And both best and worst are pretty bad. The Irishmen at the Bar shall not be named, but all the world knows that they are a fairly ill-conditioned community—savage, rude, reasonably illiterate, and not in the least witty. Many of them model themselves on the late Lord Russell and come off accordingly. Others again are beefy and vulgar and notorious bullies. The judicial bench does not include an Irish judge. Possibly this is fortunate. In London journalism the Irish scarcely count. Mr W. M. Thompson edits a sheet called *Reynolds's Newspaper* to the

complete satisfaction of Mr Clement Shorter, and Mr T. P. O'Connor edits *T. P's Weekly* and *M.A.P.*, both of them journals with which London could well afford to dispense. As for Irish reporters and sub-editors, they are few and timid and well under the heel of the Scotch, who are numerous and rampant and unblushing. In the minor professions, such as physic, publishing, and stockbroking, the Irish do not figure at all impressively. The truly great physicians of London are mostly Scotch, so—thank Heaven!—are the truly great publishers; while the stockbrokers are commonly believed to belong to the tribe of Manasseh. Of the politicians a great deal more has been written than the politicians are worth. Let us draw a decent green veil over them. Few Englishmen nowadays know which of them is alive and which of them is dead; neither can one tell off-hand whether they are for the Government or agin it. I have heard rumours of the existence in London of an Irish Literary Society. Somewhere in Holborn there exists too, I am told, an Irish Club. So far as letters are concerned, London is pretty well denuded of Irishmen. Mr George Moore

no longer abides with us. Mr W. B. Yeats has latterly preferred Dublin to the Euston Road. Mr George Bernard Shaw has become an American playwright. If these gentlemen are members of the Irish Literary Society so much the better for the Irish Literary Society. There is an Irish poetess resident in Twickenham, but *Who's Who* informs us that her Celtic quality has not been stimulated by a sojourn in her native land. The Irish Club would seem to devote itself to "Smokers," "Socials," and "Enjoyable Evenings." Its saturnalia are duly reported in *Reynolds's Newspaper*. Probably the most distinguished Irishman in the Metropolis is Sir Thomas Lipton, whose name is as prominently associated with sport as it is with tea. Then there are the Irish Guards, one of the finest bodies of men in the King's service, and Mr Dennis O'Sullivan, England's only Irish actor. It will thus be seen that the London Irish do not shine effulgently. None of them is at the top of things as it were ; none of them has got very far above the middling. The reason no doubt is that the Irish temperament is coy. The Scotchman who comes to London knows

that he is an alien and an interloper, and despised of his fellow-man, but he blusters it out. The Irishman, on the other hand, feels his position keenly and refuses to be other than diffident. As a rule, too, he is without commercial aptitude, and not vastly taken with the blessed word thrift. Besides which, Irishmen do not come to London in droves, as do the Scotch. When they emigrate, their natural tendency is toward America. In any case it cannot be suggested that the London Irish have at any time presumed to be aggressive. Neither have they made pretensions to superiority, or exhibited a disposition to clannishness. That they do not count is therefore probably their own fault; for London, in a greater degree perhaps than any other city in the world, is always open to prostrate herself before the invader, providing he be assertive and pushful enough. Leaving out the more or less eminent, and glancing for a moment at the common rank of Irishmen in London, one is confronted with two facts, and two facts only. The first of them is that the London Irish can muster in sufficient force to make a St Patrick's Day concert or so financially

successful, and the second is that the morning after, the metropolitan magistrates have invariably to deal with a fairly noble batch of Irish "drunks." Practically this is all that is known by the Cockney respecting his Irish fellow-citizen, and I think that it is distinctly unfortunate for Ireland, because it fosters a false impression. The Scotch, who are wilier, take great care not to get drunk on St Andrew's Day.

CHAPTER XII

TOM MOORE

In *The Treasury of Irish Poetry in the English Tongue*, edited by Messrs Stopford A. Brooke and T. W. Rolliston, Thomas Moore is represented by eleven pieces, to wit, "The Song of Fionnuola," "The Irish Peasant to his Mistress," "At the Mid Hour of Night," "When He who Adores Thee," "After the Battle," "The Light of other Days," "On Music," "Echo," "As Slow our Ship," "No, not more Welcome," and "My Birthday." I do not suppose for a moment that the editors intended to suggest that this selection represents in any sense the more popular of Moore's writings from the Irish point of view. Only two of the lyrics indeed, namely, "The Light of Other Days" and "As Slow our Ship" are really well known among lovers of poetry,

even in Ireland. We assume, therefore, that the remaining sets of verses have been inserted because, in the opinion of Mr Stopford A. Brooke and his co-editor, they are the best of Moore, *qua* poet in the English tongue. We quote here at length "The Song of Fionnuola" :—

"Silent, O Moyle, be the roar of thy water ;
Break not, ye breezes, your chain of repose,
While, murmuring mournfully, Lir's lonely daughter
Tells to the night-star her tale of woes.
When shall the swan, her death-note singing,
Sleep, with wings in darkness furl'd ?
When will heaven, its sweet bells ringing,
Call my spirit from this stormy world ?

Sadly, O Moyle, to thy winter-wave weeping,
Fate bids me languish long ages away ;
Yet still in her darkness doth Erin lie sleeping,
Still doth the pure light its dawning delay.
When will that day-star, mildly springing,
Warm our isle with peace and love ?
When will heaven, its sweet bells ringing,
Call my spirit to the fields above ?"

As the devil might inquire—Is this poetry ? I believe that I shall have with me the sounder critics when I say that it is small sentiment very carelessly set down. In sixteen lines we have quite a number of

different measures, and Moore would seem to have laboured under the impression that he was writing in one. In other words, the verses halt. As to the sentiment, nobody can question its utter banality. What a critic of Mr Stopford Brooke's calibre can see in it, Heaven alone knows. He might have got better verses and better sentiment out of any average breach of promise case. Nor are the remaining pieces much above the standard required by those eminent judges of poetry, the gentlemen who write *morceaux* for the drawing-room. For myself I venture the opinion that Moore lives on the strength of "Rich and Rare were the Gems she Wore," "The Meeting of the Waters," "The Harp that once through Tara's Halls," "Believe Me if all Those Endearing Young Charms," "The Minstrel Boy," "The Last Rose of Summer," and the "Canadian Boat Song," most of which efforts have been set to music, and are thereby materially aided to survival. So that on the whole Thomas Moore may not be reckoned as in any sense a purveyor of the higher kinds of poetry. It is creditable, however, to the Irish people that they should have

produced and put their emotional and moral trust in a Moore, rather than a Burns. But morals on one side, Burns is immeasurably the greater poet, even though at times he wrote drivel of the feeblest sort. All the same it must be confessed that the general consent which keeps Moore at the head of the Irish poets is sufficiently grounded. For weak vessel though he may be, we do not find another Irish poet in the English tongue who could properly be placed above him. Right down to and including William Allingham, the history of Irish poetry in the English tongue has been the history of happy-go-lucky mediocrity. Even Mangan, who has latterly been credited with a share of the authentic fire, exhibits a facility, a slipshodness and an aptness to the banal which savour of the librettist. From his most considerable production we take the following stanzas :—

THE NAMELESS ONE

" Roll forth, my song, like the rushing river
That sweeps along to the mighty sea ;
God will inspire me while I deliver
My soul to thee !

Tell thou the world, when bones lie whitening
Amid the last homes of youth and eld,
That there once was one whose veins ran lightning
No eye beheld.

Tell how his boyhood was one drear night-hour,
How shone for him, through his griefs and gloom,
No star of all heaven sends to light our
Path to the tomb.

Roll on, my song, and to after-ages
Tell how, disdaining all earth can give,
He would have taught men from wisdom's pages
The way to live.

And tell how trampled, derided, hated,
And worn by weakness, disease, and wrong,
He fled for shelter to God, who mated
His soul with song—

With song which alway, sublime or rapid,
Flowed like a rill in the morning beam,
Perchance not deep, but intense and rapid—
A mountain stream.

Tell how the Nameless, condemned for years long
To herd with demons from hell beneath,
Saw things that made him, with groans and tears, long
For even death.

Go on to tell how, with genius wasted,
Betrayed in friendship, befooled in love,
With spirit shipwrecked, and young hopes blasted,
He still, still strove."

There may be lyrical impulse here, but it is of quite an ordinary quality. The much vaunted line about "veins that ran lightning," could, I think, be paralleled out of previous poets, and the first half of it is clumsy and cacophonous. "Night-hour" and "light our" might have stepped straight out of the comic poets, and the same may be said of "years long" and "tears, long," which J. K. Stephen would have chortled over for a "metrical effect." And when we come to "still, still strove" we are among the librettists with a vengeance. I have seen James Clarence Mangan collocated with Poe. If comparisons with America must be made, we should range him alongside that bright spirit, Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

For Sir Samuel Fergusson, he has been highly praised by Mr Swinburne, Aubrey de Vere, and, of course, by Mr W. B. Yeats. Mr Yeats pronounces him to be "the greatest poet Ireland has produced, one who, among the somewhat sybaritic singers of his day was like some aged sea-king sitting among the inland wheat and poppies—the savour of the sea about him and its strength." Hearken to the ancient sea-king :—

"Then dire was their disorder, as the wavering line at first
Swayed to and fro irresolute ; then, all disrupted, burst
Like waters from a broken dam effused upon the plain,
The shelter of Kilultagh's woods and winding glens to gain.
. . . . . .
But keen-eyed Domnal, when he stood to view the rout, ere long
Spying that white, unmoving head amid the scattering throng,
Exclaimed : 'Of all their broken host one only man I see
Not flying ; and I therefore judge him impotent to be
Of use of limb. Go ; take alive,' he cried, 'and hither fetch
The hoary-haired unmoving man. . . .'
. . . A swift battalion went
And, breaking through the hindmost line, where Kellach sat hard by,
Took him alive ; and, chair and man uphoisting shoulder high,
They bore him back, his hoary locks and red eyes gleaming far,
The grimmest standard yet displayed that day o'er all the war ;
And grimly, where they set him down, he eyed the encircling ring
Of Bishops and of chafing Chiefs who stood about the King.
Then with his crozier's nether end turned towards him, Bishop Erc
Said : 'Wretch abhorred, to thee it is we owe this bloody work ;

By whose malignant counsel moved, thy hapless nephew first,
Sought impious aid of foreigners ; for which be thou accursed.' "

Surely this is rank butterwoman's jogtrot to market ; the kind of thing perhaps that Mr J. Hickory Wood and Mr Arthur Collins might joyously and jointly produce for the delight of the babies of England. But for "the greatest poet Ireland has produced," for "the aged sea-king sitting among the inland wheat and poppies" it is poor, poor stuff indeed. Of course, I do not suggest that Sir Samuel Fergusson—who really was a Scotchman, and not a sea-king at all—could not do better. The fact, however, that "the greatest poet Ireland has produced" managed to do so badly, and was capable even of worse, speaks at anyrate a small volume for Irish poetry.

The sole remaining Irish poet worth troubling about is Aubrey de Vere, and an examination of his work shows that, while he persistently exercised himself on Irish subjects, and laid himself open to the charge of Irish slackness and perfunctoriness, he could write poetry of the kind which is

entirely classic in its derivation. But it is certain that he cannot be considered to have belonged to the far-famed Keltic movement, and that he was miles behind Landor, even in the severe classic vein.

I am afraid that, broadly speaking, Ireland has not produced any poet of convincing greatness at all. The "Treasury of Irish Poetry" compared, say, with such a collection of English poetry as Palgrave's "Golden Treasury" is a ghastly exhibition. Some of the moderns set forward by the editors have, it is true, accomplished work which is not without a certain distinction; but the ancients, Thomas Moore included, are not for the reading of the discriminate. Indeed, Irish poetry in the English tongue is on the whole, like Ireland itself, a decidedly tumble-down affair. In a sense the genius of the country may be said to resemble the genius of Japan. That is to say, while every Irishman may be reckoned something of a poet in himself, there are no Irish poets; just as while the Japanese are all poets, none of them has managed to evolve a respectable poem. This, I cannot help thinking, is a pity for Ireland, and more to be sorrowed

over than her lack of commercial aptitude, than her poverty, and than her wrongs. There are those who tell us that the true poetry of the Irish is hidden away in the memories of the peasantry, taking the shape of Gaelic folk-songs, ballads, and so forth. No doubt much may be said for this theory, particularly as there is a Gaelic League which seems to be making a good deal of impression upon certain sections of the people. At the same time, it seems remarkable that, if the poetry of the Gael be so rich, and ornate, and satisfactory as those who are able to read it would have us believe, nobody takes the trouble to put it before us in a form calculated to preserve it. The Gaelic character is pretty enough, and I have seen odd translations of Gaelic poetry which promised rather well for the bulk. Yet it seems more than doubtful if the "Druid Singers," as I suppose Mr Yeats would call them, ever had among their ranks a Homer, or, for that matter, an Anacreon or a Theocritus.

And talking of the Gaelic League, I should like to note for the entertainment of persons of humour, that when I visited its establishment in Dublin some months back I found the

upper portion of the window occupied by a placard, which announced in large Roman letters that a "well-known Leaguer" was about to open a shop in Dublin—"Object to push the sale of Irish provisions." People are human even in Ireland.

CHAPTER XIII

W. B. YEATS

It might reasonably be supposed that the last drop in Ireland's cup of bitterness was Mr William Butler Yeats. An emotional and misfortunate people with the tyrant's heel on its neck, and poverty and disaster always in attendance upon it, may be excused if it does not altogether dance to the pipings of a pretty fellow like Mr Yeats. In point of fact, however, Ireland fails to dance not because of her sadness, but because Mr Yeats's minstrelsy is to all intents and purposes utterly alien to her. In England, or more correctly speaking, in London, it is true, there has been and possibly is now, a small cult of what is commonly called the Keltic Muse. And the head and front of it, of course, is Mr Yeats. He has found ardent, if undiscriminating, support among the Irish reporters and reviewers on the daily papers ;

he enjoys the patronage of Mr Clement Shorter, and he is received respectfully at the Irish Literary Club. Further I am told that there is a musically-minded elocutionist in London who goes about chanting his numbers to the three-stringed psaltery. That Mr Yeats is a poet of some parts nobody in his senses will attempt to deny. That he is a vast, or potent, or as he himself would no doubt phrase it, a Druid poet, I am not disposed to admit. The strength of him is slight indeed; the thought of him prattles for ever round the trivial. He has a still small voice with a wistfulness about it; and it is on this wistfulness that he has builded up his business. His contemporaries, the men among whom, whether he likes it or no, he will always have to range, are every one of them stronger men than he. They are ruder and more forceful, more gusty and less attenuated, if only by fits and starts. They do their best to try to belong to the great British poetical tradition. They fail lamentably, but their work bears marks of aspiration. Mr Yeats, on the other hand, has been particular to pose on a little hill of his own. He imagines that he has discovered a sort of

private tradition, the which he calls Keltic. Out of Ireland he believes himself to have captured Druid music, and this he has put up for us in sundry lyrical pieces and sundry plays. His lyrical pieces are admired in all the drawing-rooms and all the sub-editors' rooms, and his plays have been stamped with the heartfelt approval of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and Mr Max Beerbohm. The general opinion of him may be summed up in three words—How charmingly Keltic! It is an old contention of mine that Mr Yeats's qualities are not Keltic at all. I go further and say that as a fact there are no Keltic qualities which are not common in good English poetry. The best Kelt we ever had was Mr Yeats's own master, one William Blake, who was sheer Cockney. Mr Yeats is just Blake spun out, and over conscious.

"The moon, like a flower
In heaven's high bower,
With silent delight,
Sits and smiles on the night."

"I would that we were, my beloved, white birds on the foam of the sea!
We tire of the flame of the meteor, before it can fade and flee;

And the flame of the blue star of twilight, hung low
on the rim of the sky,
Has awaked in our hearts, my beloved, a sadness
that may not die."

"Sweet babe, in thy face
Soft desires I can trace,
Secret joys and secret smiles,
Little pretty infant wiles.

. . . . .

As thy softest limbs I feel
Smiles as of the morning steal
O'er thy cheek, and o'er thy breast
Where thy little heart doth rest."

"I told my love, I told my love,
I told her all my heart,
Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears.
Ah, she did depart!

. . . .

Soon after she was gone from me,
A traveller came by,
Silently, invisibly:
He took her with a sigh."

"Beloved, gaze in thine own heart,
The holy tree is growing there;
From joy the holy branches start,
And all the trembling flowers they bear.
The changing colours of its fruit
Have dowered the stars with merry light;
The surety of its hidden root
Has planted quiet in the night."

Which is Blake, and which is Yeats? You may put the name of either under any of these stanzas, without being guilty of an unpardonable critical lapse. Mr Yeats took Blake and imitated him as frankly, and it may be, as unconsciously, as many less sophisticated versifiers have imitated Tennyson, or Mr Swinburne, or Rossetti. It is creditable to him that he should have had discernment enough to perceive in Blake an exceptional and individual content; but why having got hold of that content, having saturated himself with it, as it were, and having found the exploitation of it easy and provocative of praise, Mr Yeats should turn round and call it Keltic is something of a puzzle. Of course, one has to remember that among a people whose interests are material, rather than spiritual, the poet who would get a hearing is compelled to have resort to a certain amount of adventitiousness and empyricism.

> "We poets in our youth begin in gladness;
> But thereof come in the end despondency and madness,"

saith Wordsworth. We poets in our youth

also begin in sincerity and with a single eye to the glory of the Muses. But too frequently, even while our youth is still with us, we begin to think about the glory of ourselves, and take steps accordingly. It is good for us, if we have any gift at all, to organise and advertise a school, with ourselves carefully elected by ourselves to the position of arch-priest. The critic who in an idle hour set down "Cockney School," has a great deal to answer for. Somebody followed him hard with the "Lake School." And in due course we had the "Fleshly School." It is to be noted, however, that these epithets were bestowed by the critics upon the poets, and not by the poets upon the poets themselves. I venture to suggest that it has been slightly different in the case of Mr Yeats and his following. In Mr Yeats's mind—perhaps without his being wholly alive to it—something like the following has taken place: "To be of any account in this world a poet must have a quality or cry of his own. There is a quality, or poignancy of individualism, about Blake which has not yet become obvious to the multitude. I admire it, and I can imitate it, and possibly improve upon

it; therefore let me adopt it for my own. And as I am an Irishman I shall cause it to be known not as the spirit of Blake, but as the Keltic quality. Selah!" I do not suggest for a moment that Mr Yeats's conduct in this matter has been either wicked or unjustifiable. I do not even suggest that Mr Yeats has been quite aware of what he was doing; but not to put too fine a point upon it, I do say that he has been "modern," and that it is a thousand pities. There is nothing in Ireland, and there never has been anything in Ireland which will justify the appropriation of Blake as a sort of exclusive Irish product; and Mr Yeats has written nothing which he could not have written just as well had he been a Cockney, or a Hebrew, capable of appreciating the spiritual and technical parts of Blake, and of perceiving the beauty of certain scraps of Irish history and folk-lore. As an Irish poet, Mr Yeats, in my opinion, fails completely. It is as reasonable to call him an Irish poet as it would be to call Milton a Hebrew poet because he wrote "Paradise Lost," or Mr Swinburne a Greek poet because he wrote "Atalanta." There is not an Irishman, *qua*

Irishman, who wants Mr Yeats; any more than there is an Irishman, *qua* Irishman, who wants Mr Yeats's Irish Literary Theatre. Mr Yeats's poetry and Mr Yeats's Irish Literary Theatre are Blake's poetry and Blake's Literary Theatre. They belong to the Euston Road, and not to Tara; they are cultivated, wary, wistful, minor English, and not Irish at all. You have to be English, and a trifle subtle at that, to get on with them. Blake's laurels are very posthumous and recent because the Englishmen of his time were busy with Pope and Crabbe, and had a sort of suspicion that Wordsworth was a lunatic. Englishmen did not know even Shakespeare in those days; at anyrate not in the way that we know him nowadays. To the Pope-suckled Englishman of culture Shakespeare, if he was anything at all, was a sort of robustious and flowery dramatist. They played him in full-bottomed wigs and small clothes. To-day the tendencies are all the other way. Shakespeare we shall tell you was no playwright, but a poet, and the biggest of them. Our modern actors spoil him for us, not by their cuts and modifications, but by their raree-shows and mouthings.

Who of them can say for you to your soul's satisfaction :

> . . . . O here,
> Will I set up my everlasting rest
> And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
> From this world-weary flesh" ?

Shakespeare is for all time and more and more for the closet. Blake is a greater poet than the critical are disposed to admit, even in this age of tender enthusiasms. And Mr Yeats is a poet, not because he is Irish or Keltic, but in so far and precisely as far as he has had the good sense to take Blake for his master. For Kelticism as it is understood by its professors, Shakespeare abounds in it.

> *1st Lady.* Come, my gracious lord,
> Shall I be your playfellow ?
> *Mam.* No, I'll none of you.
> *1st Lady.* Why, my sweet lord ?
> *Mam.* You'll kiss me hard, and speak to me as if
> I were a baby still.—I love you better.
> *2nd Lady.* And why so, my lord ?
> *Mam.* Not for because
> Your brows are blacker ; yet black brows, they say,
> Become some women best, so that there be not
> Too much hair there, but in a semi-circle
> Or half-moon made with a pen.

2nd Lady. Who taught you this?
Mam. I learnt it out of women's faces.—Pray now
What colour are your eyebrows?
1st Lady. Blue, my lord.
Mam. Nay, there's a mock. I have seen a lady's nose
That has been blue, but not her eyebrows.
2nd Lady. Hark ye;
The queen your mother rounds apace; we shall
Present our service to a fine new prince
One of these days; and then you'd wanton with us,
If we would have you.
1st Lady. She is spread of late
Into a goodly bulk. Good time encounter her!
Her. What wisdom stirs amongst you?—Come, sir, now
I am for you again. Pray you, sit by us,
And tell's a tale.
Mam. Merry or sad shall't be?
Her. As merry as you will.
Mam. A sad tale's best for winter:
I have one of sprites and goblins.
Her. Let's have that, good sir,
Come on, sit down. Come on, and do your best,
To fright me with your sprites, you're powerful at it.
Mam. There was a man—
Her. Nay, come sit down; then on.
Mam. Dwelt by a churchyard—I will tell it softly;
Yond crickets shall not hear it.
Her. Come on then,
And give't in mine ear.

There is enough Keltic quality here, surely, to satisfy both Mr Yeats and Mrs Shorter. In fine, this tiny episode out of *A Winter's Tale* is quite as good, and quite as Keltic, as anything the Blake School, to give it its honest title, has managed hitherto to produce. What the average Irishman would think about it is another story. It is a pity to take from Ireland even a trifle over which she might, not improperly, plume herself. But Mr Yeats in the figure of Irish poet reminds us of nothing so much as a peacock butterfly purchased in the chrysalis state out of France by the careful entomologist, hidden in a plant-pot at his parlour window, and slaughtered and labelled British so soon as it has had time to spread its wistful wings.

CHAPTER XIV

WIT AND HUMOUR

It has been remarked by a certain hawker of platitudes that humour is that which makes a man laugh. There have been several definitions of wit, one of them by Sydney Smith, and all of them more or less wanting in completeness. But in a general way nobody is particularly keen on definitions, provided they can get for their amusement and exhilaration either humour or wit. During the past few decades we have heard a vast deal of the advantages which accrue from the possession of what is called a sense of humour. This especial sense or faculty for appreciating a joke is nowadays cultivated, and consciously cultivated, by all sorts and conditions of people. The gravest and most reverend persons are wont to enliven their conversation or their discourse with quips, cranks, gibes, and other sallies, ingeniously

calculated to set the listener in a roar. The House of Commons has latterly appeared to be filled with gentlemen who live to amuse each other ; there are judges who seem almost incapable of opening their mouths without attempting the hilarious, and even bishops and bankers must have their little joke. The press also strains after humorsomeness in every degree, and when critics wish to be particularly severe they write simply, "Mr So-and-So has no sense of humour." And here, in effect, we have what I conceive to be another distinct injustice to Ireland. For Irish wit and humour have passed into a tradition, and are believed by good judges to be the very wittiest and most humorous wit and humour the gods are likely to vouchsafe to us. In the course of years many fairly thick volumes have been compiled out of the abundance of humorous material Ireland has furnished forth. To turn to such a volume, however, is in my opinion to experience a certain disappointment. There are jokes, it is true, and jokes innumerable ; but somehow for the modern laughter seeker there is a distinct flatness about them. Furthermore, they are nearly all "chestnuts," a fact which

renders it pretty plain that the people of Ireland have come to a full stop as it were, and ceased to produce them. I subjoin a few examples culled hap-hazard from a book published so recently as last year :

A prisoner was trying to explain to a judge and jury his innocence of a certain crime. "It's not meself," he cried, "as'll be afther thrying to desave yer honours. I didn't hit the poor dead gintleman at all, at all. It was him that sthruck the blow, and the exartion killed him, and, what's more, I wasn't there at the time." "I perceive," observed the judge, "you are trying to prove an alibi." "An al-loi-boi!" exclaimed the prisoner, evidently pleased at the big word being suggested to strengthen his defence. "Yes," said the judge. "Can you tell me what is a good alibi?" "Faith, yer honour," replied the prisoner, "and it's a loi boi which the prisoner gets off."

"What passed between yourself and the complainant?" inquired the magistrate in a county court. "I think, sor," replied the worthy O'Brien, "a half-dozen bricks and a lump of paving-stone."

"I say, Paddy," said a tourist to his car-driver, "that is the worst-looking horse you drive I ever saw. Why don't you fatten him up?" "Fat him up, is it?" queried the Jehu, "faix, the poor baste can hardly carry the little mate that's on him now!"

"Have you had any experience with children?" inquired a lady of a prospective nurse. "Oh, yes, mum," replied the woman, blandly. "Oi used to be a child mesilf wanst."

A jarvey, who was driving through the streets of Dublin, met with an obstruction in the shape of a man riding a donkey. "Now then, you two!" he exclaimed.

An Irish member, named Dogherty, who subsequently became Chief-Justice of Ireland, asked Canning what he thought of his maiden speech. "The only fault I can find with it," said Canning, "is that you called the Speaker sir, too often." "My dear fellow," replied Dogherty, "if you knew the mental state I was in while speaking, you would not wonder if I had called him ma'am."

"Get on, man; get on!" said a traveller

to his car-driver. "Wake up your nag!" "Shure, sor," was the reply, "I haven't the heart to bate him." "What's the matter with him?" inquired the traveller; "is he sick?" "No, sor," answered the jarvey, "he's not sick, but it's unlucky he is, sor, unlucky! You see, sor, every morning, before I put him i' the car, I tosses him whether he'll have a feed of oats or I'll have a dhrink of whisky, an' the poor baste has lost five mornings running!"

"Did you notice no suspicious character about the neighbourhood?" said a magistrate to an inexperienced policeman. "Shure, yer hanner," replied the policeman, "I saw but one man, an' I asked him what he was doing there at that time o' night? Sez he, 'I have no business here just now, but I expect to open a jewelry sthore in the vicinity later on.' At that I sez, 'I wish you success, sor.'" "Yes," said the magistrate, "and he did open a jewelry store in the vicinity later on, and stole seventeen watches." "Begorra, yer hanner," answered the constable after a pause, "the man may have been a thafe, but he was no liar!"

"Bridget, I don't think it is quite the thing for you to entertain company in the kitchen." "Don't ye worry, mum. Shure, an' oi wouldn't be afther deprivin' ye o' th' parler."

An old lady in Dublin, weighing about sixteen stone, engaged a car-driver to convey her to a North Wall steamer. Arrived there, she handed the driver his legal fare—sixpence. Gazing disconsolately at the coin in his hand, and then at the fat old lady, he exclaimed as he turned away—"I'll lave ye to the Almoighty, ma'am!"

"Prisoner," demanded a magistrate of a man charged with begging, "have you any visible means of support?" "Yes, yer honour," replied the prisoner, and then turning to his wife who was in court, he said, "Bridget, stand up, so that the coort can see yez?"

Now it is plain that we have here a fairly representative selection of the kind of wit and humour that is supposed to come to us out of Ireland. Some of it no doubt is reasonably good, some of it is quite mild. Possibly it

is amusing, and calculated to tickle old-fashioned people. Yet one has distinct qualms about it when one considers it as a means for provoking the laughter of the twentieth-century person. The fact is that humour has been made so much of a cult in the modern mind that it has to be very humorous indeed, not to say a trifle subtle, if it is to raise a smile. And in considering the examples quoted, we are faced with a further difficulty. Are these anecdotes of unquestionable Irish extraction? I am afraid not. Their authenticity is impeachable. *Mutatis mutandis*, they have been told of Cockneys and Yorkshire men, and Somersetshire men, and even of Scotchmen. Furthermore, there is nothing in them that can be considered peculiarly and exclusively Irish, or indicative of the Irish temperament and character as it exists to-day. Your modern Irishman, as I have pointed out, is a dreary and melancholy wight. Laughter and sprightliness have died out of him, and whether in thought or word he is about as dull and plantigrade as even a sad man can well be. The eminent people who stand for Ireland in this country are all of

them afflicted with a similar lack of cheerfulness. Rouse them, and they can be as bitter and vituperative and aboriginal as any Scotchman of them all; but their ordinary habit is sad, uncertain, and inept, and they do not know how to laugh. Here and there one of them at the Bar, or in the House of Commons, or at a greasy journalistic banquet, does his feeble best to keep up the Irish tradition for smartness and wittiness of remark. But the attempt is invariably a failure, because at the back of it there is no real brain and no real flow of spirits. One of the biggest bullies at the Bar is a beefy Irishman who esteems himself a great humorist. I have heard him fire off twenty or thirty idiotic jokes in the course of half an hour or so, and always does he snigger at the beginning of his precious jibe; always does he snigger in the middle; always does he make pretence of becoming apoplectic with chortle at the end. The circumstance that people laugh at him and not with him, does not appear to occur to his small, if legal, mind. His dearest friends call him "the sniggerer," and it is said that he is in the habit of retiring to his chambers of afternoons for the purpose of having a protracted fit of

giggling. Primed with four or five glasses of cheap port, his capacity for low comedy becomes so evident that one trembles lest some enterprising theatrical manager should offer him the Leno-Welch part in next year's "Little Goody Two-shoes." Another "witty" Irishman, who shall be nameless, came to these shores with a fair array of good gifts at his disposal. Knowing himself for an Irishman, and having faith in the Irish tradition, he forthwith set up in business as a posturing clown and professional grinner through horse-collars, with the result that his genius is altogether obscured. Irishmen of all degrees will do better if they endeavour to remember that they have really no sense of humour left. The only one of them who has made anything like a satisfactory reputation in London, Mr W. B. Yeats to wit, has helped himself to it by being as devoid of humour as a bone-yard. Mr Yeats has never been known publicly to try his hand at the very smallest joke. The sobriety of the hearse is his, and much good sense also. For the eminent Irish, as we know them amongst us, are by nature neither witty nor humorous; and those who try to

be so, succeed in being only fatuous and vulgar. Somebody has said cuttingly that a Frenchman consists of equal parts of tiger and monkey. Of certain of the eminent Irish in London it may be said that they are half jackal and half performing dog ; for they are at once hungry and fantastic.

CHAPTER XV

MORE WIT AND HUMOUR

The real truth about Irish humour as a thing to itself and apart is that it is based either on ignorance or on a certain slowness of mind. The Dublin car driver who on being told by a constable that his name was obliterated from his car replied, "Arrah, me name's not Oblitherated, it's O'Grady," no doubt achieved what will pass among the average for humour. All the same, he did not know that he was saying anything good, and his *mot*, if *mot* one may call it, was the direct outcome of a profound ignorance of the English language. The books of Irish humour abound with instances of this form of humorsomeness: "You are not opaque, are you?" sarcastically asked one Irishman of another who was standing in front of him at the theatre. "Indeed I'm not," replied the other, "it's O'Brien that I am." Clearly

one might manufacture this kind of humour *ad infinitum*. The Chinese are said to consider it a great joke if a man should fall down and break his arm, and I have seen Englishmen laughing at a man who has been unfortunate enough to have his hat blown off in a high wind. But the Irish do not laugh at these things. Even the native bull, of which they are so proud, fails to tickle them. The Irishman says his bull solemnly and unconsciously, and the Englishman does the laughing. In essence the Irish bull is really a blunder. Nuttall, with his usual charming frankness, defines a bull as "a ludicrous inconsistency, or blunder in speech." Children and Irishmen are always making them: "If it please the coort," quoth an Irish attorney, "if I am wrong in this, I have another pint which is equally conclusive." An Irish reporter, giving an account of a burglary, remarked: "After a fruitless search, all the money was recovered, except one pair of boots!" A Dublin clerk on being asked why he was a quarter of an hour late at the office, made answer: "The tram-car I came by was full, so I had to walk." "This is the seventh night you've come

home in the morning," observed an Irish lady to her spouse, "the next time you go out, you'll stay at home and open the door for yourself." The following advertisement is said to have appeared in a Dublin newspaper: "Whereas John Hall has fraudulently taken away several articles of wearing apparel, without my knowledge, this is to inform him that if he does not forthwith return the same his name shall be made public." An Irishman who accidentally came across another Irishman who had failed to meet him after a challenge addressed him in these words: "Well, sir, I met you this morning and you did not turn up; however I am determined to meet you to-morrow morning, whether you come or not." "Dhrunk!" said a man, speaking of his neighbour, "he was that dhrunk that he made ten halves of ivry word." A man who was employed as a hod-carrier was told that he must always carry up fourteen bricks in his hod. One morning the supply of bricks ran short, and the man could find but thirteen to put in his hod. In answer to a loud yell from the street one of the masons on top of the scaffolding

called out : " What do you want ? " " T'row me down wan brick," bawled Pat, pointing to his hod, " to make me number good."

Of course, the great and abiding glory of Ireland in the way of bull-makers was the never-to-be-forgotten Sir Boyle Roche. This worthy knight once charged a political opponent with being " an enemy to both kingdoms who wishes to diminish the brotherly affection of the two sister countries." He also said that " a man differs from a bird in not being able to be in two places at once," and that " the Irish people were living from hand to mouth, like the birds of the air." A petition of the citizens of Belfast in favour of Catholic emancipation he stigmatised as " an airy fabric based upon a sandy foundation," and he expressed his willingness " to give up, not only a part, but, if necessary, even the whole of our constitution to preserve the remainder." In one of his most famous speeches there occurs the appended passage : " Mr Speaker, if we once permitted the villainous French Masons to meddle with the buttresses and walls of our ancient constitu-

tion, they would never stop, nor stay, sir, until they brought the foundation stones tumbling down about the ears of the nation. If these Gallican villains should invade us, 'tis on that table maybe those honourable members might see their own destinies lying in heaps atop of one another. Here, perhaps, sir, the murderous crew would break in and cut us to pieces, and throw our bleeding heads upon that table to stare us in the face."

"Is your father alive yet?" inquired one O'Brien of one M'Gorry. "No," replied M'Gorry solemnly, "not yet!" A beggar called at a house and said: "For the love of hiven, ma'am, give me a crust of bread, for I'm so thirsty I don't know where I'll sleep to-night." All of which is very funny and as who should say, very quaint. But is it humour? It provokes a smile certainly, yet it points to simplicity, rather than subtilty, in the Irish character. Indeed the absolute truth about the bull is that it is the child of a plentiful lack of wit. A nice derangement of epitaphs, an opening of one's mouth and a putting of one's foot in it, may provoke mirth in other people, but it does

not prove one to be either witty or merry. It is satisfactory to know that, according to the latest observations, the fine art of bull-making is going out of fashion among Irishmen. The Irish were the inventors of the bull, they brought it to its greatest perfection, they made it redound to their credit as a witty nation ; and one cannot deny their right to cease from its manufacture if they see fit. In the House of Commons a bull is nowadays seldom perpetrated, whether consciously or unconsciously, at any rate by the Irish Party. Irish Members of Parliament have grown too wary to be caught bulling. They walk delicately in English-cut frock-coats ; they rather pride themselves on their ability to keep down the brogue, and at the bare mention of the word "bull," they are prone to shiver.

There is one feature of Irish wit and humour which is worthy of admiration and imitation. It is a negative feature truly, but an excellent one. Irishmen do not seem capable of that last infirmity of the doting mind—the pun. To play effectively upon words is, of course, an art in itself, and kept within bounds it is an amusing art ; but the man who drops out of

art into sheer mechanism, which is what has happened to the average punster, cannot be considered worthy of the respect of his fellows. The Irish, as I have said, do not appear to have descended to these depths. They may be a worn-out, a weary, a dull-witted, an exhausted, and a brooding and melancholy people, but they are not punsters. Herein they have a distinct advantage over the English, among whom the pun appears to obtain wider and wider currency. It is a lamentable fact that there are judges on the English Bench who never let slip an opportunity for punning. It makes juries and the gallery guffaw, and it gets a judge the reputation of being a wit and the possessor of those minor literary graces which are supposed to be included in the judicial prerogative. Judges are commonly understood to be irremovable, but I think that after their third pun retirement should be the only course for them. The man who makes a pun insults the intellect of his auditors and commits a gross outrage upon the language. Let all punsters, whether in high or low places, take heed that they are vulgar and vicious persons, and neither witty

nor wise. A thousand honest bulls are less to be deprecated than the weeniest pun that was ever let loose.

Before leaving this part of our subject it is perhaps desirable that we should remember that two of the very wittiest men of our own time have come to us from Ireland. One of them was the late Mr Oscar Wilde and the other is Mr George Bernard Shaw. Of Oscar Wilde, excepting that in his prime he was a wit of the first water, I shall say nothing. Mr George Bernard Shaw, however, is another story. As a reformer and a serious writer I make small account of him. On the other hand, as a wit, he is a portent. He has been an unconscionable time coming into his own, but in America, at anyrate, people are beginning, by childlike, dim degrees, to perceive that he has brilliance. If he had published the substance of his printed work in any other form but that of plays, he might have been a recognised and prosperous humorist long ago. The people who supply the wit and humour of the day may be set down, without injustice, for a sorry and indifferent company. Burnand, Payne, Emanuel, Jerome, Lucas, Sims, Hickory

Wood, and Barrie—these are some of the names of them. And what do they stand for? Parts of *Punch*, *Eliza*, *Three Men in a Boat*, *The Inside Completuar Britanniaware* (O blood and knives!) *Mustard and Cress*, or, The Fat Man's Sabbath Morning, *The White Cat*, or, Cooper's Entire, *Peter Pan*, or, The Old Man's Crèche. Heaven save us and keep us from wishing that this squad of awkward w'tlings had never been born! Mr George Bernard Shaw in his sole person, and Irishman though he be, is worth a wilderness of them. Some day we shall find it out, and in that good hour Ireland will be able to boast that one of her sons was nearly as great, nearly as humorous, and nearly as popular as, say, Mr Mark Twain.

CHAPTER XVI

DIRT

I SUPPOSE that next to the Scotch, the Irish are out and out the dirtiest people on the earth. But whereas Scotch dirt is a crude and gross affair, Irish dirt has still a pathetic and almost tender grace about it. "Dear, dirty Dublin" sigh the emotional in such matters—though you never catch anybody shedding a tear for remembrance of dear, filthy Glasgow. Dublin is indubitably a dirty city, just as Ireland is a dirty country, and for Irishmen, at any rate, the Government is a dirty Government. And it is not because Dublin or Ireland is dirty of necessity, or in the way that the Black Country or the East End of London are dirty. Not a bit of it: Dublin and Ireland

are dirty simply and solely because the Dublin and Irish people steadfastly refuse to keep them clean. To all intents and purposes the Irish people have lost, if indeed they ever possessed, that gift of punctilious domesticity, which insists first and last and always on cleanliness. In Dublin you shall come upon more dirty hotels and more dirty houses than in pretty well any other city of its size in Europe. True, the dirt has the merit of not being too obvious, and falling short of the scandalous ; but it is still there, and you cannot get away from it. Properly looked into, it recommends itself to you as the dirt of a happy-go-lucky, neglectful, behind-hand and poverty-stricken people, rather than of a people who are flagrantly given over to dirt for its own sake. It is the dirt of the slattern who is for ever dusting things with her apron, rather than of the stout idleback for whom dust and grime and sloppiness have no terrors, and no reproach. It is a dirt which is the direct consequence of bad seasons, the decay of trade, monetary stringency, and public and private listlessness and apathy. It is the kind of dirt which one associates

with the boarding-houses of elderly ladies who have seen "better days." Ireland's better days have been few and far between, and they would seem to be all past. Hence, no doubt, the dustiness and dinginess and shabby gentility of her parlours. In an Irish hotel dirt and its common concomitant, tumbledownness, are ever before you. The floors clamour to be swept, the furniture would give a day of its life for a polishing, the wall papers are faded and fly-blown, there are cobwebs in the top corners and dust in the bottom corners, the windows are rickety and perfunctorily cleaned, the carpets infirm and old, the linen worn and yellow with age, the crockery cracked and chipped, the cutlery dull and greasy, and the general air of the place shabby and forlorn. I do not say that there are no cleanly and spick-and-span hotels in Dublin ; for there is at least one such establishment. But, in the main, what one may term the semi-clean, semi-dirty, used-to-be kind of hotel prevails. Even the waiters, though their hair be greased and their faces shine by virtue of vigorous applications of soap, wear frayed and threadbare swallow-tails and a sort of

perennial yesterday's shirt-front. And what is true of the hotels is true of the houses. There is a district between Sackville Street and the —— Railway Station which contains a very large number of the sombrest, most forbidding, and dirtiest-looking domiciles it has ever been my lot to come across. Formerly these houses were the homes of the easy and the well-to-do; now they are let off in tenements to the poorest of the poor. Black and grinding poverty peeps out of the cracked and paper-patched windows of them; groups of grubby, bare-legged, blue-cold children huddle round their decrepit doors, or scamper up and down the filthy pavements in front of them. The places may be sanitary enough within the meaning of the Acts, but that they are filthy and foul, to a nauseating degree, no person can doubt. Such rookeries would be clean swept away by the authorities in any English city. In Dublin nobody seems to trouble about them, or to be in the smallest sense disturbed by them. They are a part and parcel of dear, dirty Dublin, and haply Dublin would not be Dublin without them.

In the other Irish cities and towns the

same tendency to squalor and grime and filth is painfully noticeable. Even in a centre like Portadown, which, be it noted, is Protestant and to a great extent new, the same undesirable traits assail you pretty well wherever you go. In a city set on a hill, without a factory to its name, I found a blackness and a grime which reminded me of nothing so much as Gravesend or Stockport. The hotel in that same city was as crazy as it was chilly and comfortless—poky rooms and dark little passages, meagre and dubious furnishings, and dirt, dirt, dirt, from basement to attic. Yet the place seemed populous with cleaner wenches, floor-scrubbers, and clout-women. There was a boy in a green apron, who appeared to do nothing all day but dust the banisters, and the waiters were eternally flicking the dust of things with their napkins. And such waiters : wall-eyed, heated, fumbling, grumpy, and incompetent. They insisted on getting in one another's way, and they had a gift of dilatoriness that amounted to genius. In this place, let me set down a small fact about the Irish waiter which may, perhaps, save future travellers in Ireland some

trouble. If you ask an English waiter for a time-table he will bring it to you, and leave you to your own devices. If you ask an Irish waiter, he will say "Time-table, yes, sir. Where will you be afther goin', sir?' You are taken unawares, and quite foolishly tell him the name of the next town on your itinerary. Forthwith he informs you that there is a very good hotel there "be the name of the Jukes Head," and that the next train "convanient" goes at "wan-thirty." Is it a quick train? "Oh yes." Will he see that your baggage is taken to the station in time to catch it? Certainly he will. You keep your mind easy and turn up at the station at "wan-thirty." There is a train at one-thirty, it is true, but, unluckily for you, it does not go within a hundred miles of your place of destination. The train you ought to have caught went at ten-thirty, and there is not another one till late at night, while, if it be Saturday, you must wait till Monday morning, because there are practically no Sunday trains in Ireland. Do not imagine for a moment that your Irish waiter has misinformed you with malice aforethought, or out of a desire

to lengthen your sojourn in his employer's hotel; because this is not the case. He is merely an Irishman, and therefore a born blunderer; and he does his best to blunder every time.

CHAPTER XVII

THE TOURIST

The tourist is the curse of Ireland, as he is the curse of most places. When one comes to consider the enormous number of grievances the Irish and their political figure-heads have managed to rake up, one wonders that the tourist should hitherto have escaped. That he constitutes a grievance, and a grievance which affects seriously the main body of the Irish people, cannot be doubted. It is quite obvious, to begin with, that the tourist in Ireland is usually of the hated Sassenach race. Irishmen do not tour in their own country as Englishmen do, or as Scotchmen have been known to do. They have too little money for indulgences of that kind, and if money be plentiful they prefer to visit England or America. The Englishman, however, insists on taking a holiday in Ireland sometime in his life, even though it

be only on his honeymoon. So that in the more suitable months the country bristles with tourists, and the great majority of them are English. Secondly, the tourist, being English, is always more or less hilarious, supercilious and aggressive, and these are qualities of which the Irish of all people least like a display, at any rate from an Englishman. Time out of mind the English tourist has been the covert *bête noire* of the Continental peoples on account of these very traits. An Englishman on the Continent, especially if he be a middle-class Englishman, or a very wealthy Englishman, has a knack of divesting himself utterly of the thin veneer of social decency which he manages to maintain at home. Somehow the air of the Continent exhilarates him to all sorts of posturing and ridiculousness. The vulgarian, the Philistine and the snob in him become greatly emphasised. He can shout aloud, and be rude to everybody, because he believes that nobody understands what he is pleased to call his lingo. Besides which the Englishman on the Continent always believes in his private bosom that he is a philanthropist, a sort of circular-touring benevolence as it were.

"Who is it," he inquires grandiloquently, "that keeps these pore foreigners going? Why the English, and the English alone. It is we who bring millions of pounds to their starved, tax-burdened countries. It is we who populate their rapacious hotels and make their seasons for them, and drop our idiot monies at their gambling tables, and pay francs at the entrances to their art galleries, and climb their rotten mountains, and steam, to soft Lydian airs, up their rivers, and bathe in their luke-warm seas, and tip them and patronise them, and joke with them, and generally afford them opportunities for existence." This attitude has been noted and laughed at by the cynical, time out of mind; but it cannot be eradicated from the Englishman's fairly comprehensive stock of idiosyncrasies, and it remains to this day typical of the breed. To Ireland the English tourist proceeds focused for pretty well the same view of things. Of course, he is disposed to look upon your Irishman as being rather more of a man and a brother than is the low foreigner. Further, he invariably believes that by a judicious expenditure on "drinks," coupled with an

easy, slap-you-on-the-back but still superior manner, he can extract from the Irishmen with whom he comes into contact the whole secret of the Irish Question. In other words, he makes a point of going to Ireland with his eyes open ; so that when he returns he may remark huskily in his club—"Sir, I have visited Ireland, and I know the Irish people through and through. Waiter, a large Scotch, please!" Thus is the altruism of the tourist in Ireland tempered with a taste for inquiry and politics. I suppose that in no country in the world is the tourist allowed so much of his fling as in this same green Erin. For example, in Ireland he takes care to call every man "Pat," and every woman "Kathleen mavourneen." If he called a Frenchman "Froggy," or a German "Johnny Deutscher" he would stand a good chance of getting his nose pulled. But in Ireland a bold peasantry has learned to smile and smile, and touch the hat, and take the coppers, and provide the political information for which his honour is gasping without so much as turning a hair. It is not really in the Irish blood to take these travelling mountebanks, with their loud suits and

louder manners and louder money, seriously or even indifferently. On the other hand, your true Irish resent in their hearts the entire business. It is their poverty and not their wills which consent; though singularly enough, as I have already said, you will seldom find an Irishman indulging himself in growls about it. And it is this very poverty which might reasonably give rise to the Irishman's third grievance against the tourist. For an Englishman travelling in Ireland is always a sort of perambulating incitement to envy, because of his apparent wealth. He may be only a clerk out for a fortnight's "rest and change" on money squeezed out of the meagrest kind of salary; yet to the penniless Irishman he seems literally to be made of wealth. And Pat—let us call him Pat, so that the tourists of this world may know whom we mean—is not without certain reasoning powers of his own, poverty-stricken though he may be. It seems to me only human that he should reason about the English tourist in a way which brings him little comfort and throws considerable discredit on England. He perceives that compared with himself the Englishman

is not altogether a person of genius or an angel of light. His ignorance is appalling, even to an Irishman; his manners are none of the choicest; his capacity for eating and drinking borders on the marvellous. "Pat" notes these things and wonders. He wonders why there should be such tremendous gulfs between loving subjects of the King. He wonders where people who travel on cheap tickets get all their money; he wonders how they manage to pay fifty pounds a rod for certain fishing, or fifty pounds a gun for certain shooting; he wonders why they cackle so about priestcraft, and Home Rule, and the development of industry; he wonders whether they have really been elected by heaven to be a dominant people; he wonders why he himself should have been given over to their governance; and with all his wondering he is not consoled. There is probably nobody to tell him that for irremediable reasons the Irish are never likely to become a happy and prosperous nation. There is nobody to tell him that this dazzling Englishman is so much gross material, with no tradition of spirituality at the back of him. There is nobody to tell him that it is the

British habit to think first and foremost of its own welfare and comfort, and that it pities rather than admires those countries or persons who have been foredoomed to contribute to them. Therefore he goes on wondering without consolation, and within him there is discontent and bitterness, despite his outward subservience. There has been very tall talk in sundry well-meaning circles as to the advantages which are to accrue to Ireland from the development of her trade in tourists. No doubt it is extremely heterodox to say so, but for myself, I incline to the opinion that the tourist business on its present lines is a snare and a delusion and a demoralisation. It takes money into the country certainly, but it takes other things which are not by any means so desirable. Moreover, that very money helps materially to cloud and confuse important issues. The real condition of Ireland, as it is known to Irish officialdom, and as it should be known to Englishmen, is glossed over and hidden away as a direct result of the eleemosynary tendencies of the English tourist. A people of the temper and parts of the Irish people should be in a position to

live out of Irish land and Irish industry, and not be in any serious sense dependent upon the fitful generosity of sight-seers and problem-solvers. Ireland has had far too much *largesse*, both private and public. The English tourist distributes his shillings ; the English Government distributes its loans and other financial bolsterings - up. What is wanted is a fair field and no favour for Irish labour. It will take many generations of tourists to provide for Ireland any such good gift. I do not believe that the Government loans can provide it either. A newer and a little less rapacious and less unintelligent race of landlords might achieve it. The bland, benevolent money-dropping Englishman, who out of his generosity or his scheme of politics desires to assist the Irish people, should buy a place in Ireland and do his best to live there. The country is full of properties which would be cheap at treble the prices that are now being asked for them. There is plenty of land and there is plenty of labour. The Land Laws, it is true, seem on the face of them ridiculous, that is to say if you happen to be a landlord whose eye is for ever on the rent-roll and the automatic

improvement of properties at other people's expense. But if, on the other hand, you are a comfortable, high Tory, patriarchal landlord, with bowels, and a proper appreciation of sport, and a proper interest in agriculture and the breeding of cattle, Ireland need have no terrors for you. There is a notion abroad that the Irish farmer has deep-rooted prejudices against landlords of whatever degree. We are told that he is a confirmed shirker of the prime duty of rent-paying, and that he will let a holding go to rack and ruin for the sole purpose of cheapening its value, so that he may himself buy it in for the merest song. The demand throughout the country, we are told, is for farmer and peasant proprietorship, and the legislature has formulated wonderful machinery in the interest of such proprietorship. My own view is that of two evils the Irish cultivators have in this matter chosen the lesser. On the one hand they had rack rents, absentee landlords and agents who, if they had bodies to be shot, appear to have had very small souls to be saved. On the other hand, they have been offered schemes of purchase that sound very well but do not work out quite so well in practice. Still a

bad scheme of purchase is better than bad landlords and worse agents. An intelligent and reasonable landlord of bucolic tastes, who will look as sharply after his agent or factor as he will look after his tenants on rent-day, could in my opinion do quite as well in Ireland as he can do in England. In a sentence, Ireland wants settling, not touring.

CHAPTER XVIII

POTATOES

A GENTLEMAN who is universally applauded as a handler of the pencil and a smart after-dinner speaker lately remarked that if he were compelled to give up one of two things, to wit, tobacco or Christianity, he would give up Christianity. Then, with a slack-minded man's weakness, he went on to explain that a Christianity which prohibited tobacco would not be Christianity at all. "When all things were made," we are told, "nothing was made better than tobacco." Without being an anti-tobacconist, without being a non-smoker, without indeed being other than "a great blower of the cloud," it is quite reasonable for one to doubt whether on the whole tobacco is the blessing that modern men hold it to be. There is no evidence to show that men's intellects have improved since the introduction of smoking. It seems

probable that the high-water mark of British brains had been reached somewhat prior to the time in which James I. had occasion to adorn polite letters with his notorious "Counterblast." Shakespeare did not smoke. Mitcham shag was nothing to Ben Jonson, nor navy plug to Milton. It is our Barries, and our J. K. Jeromes, and our F. C. Goulds who electrify the country with their pipes in their mouths. Now the person who is commonly credited with having introduced the art and practice of tobacco smoking into England is Sir Walter Raleigh. There is a legend that when that gentleman's servant first saw him smoking, he rushed out for a bucket of water, in the belief that his master was on fire. By a strange coincidence, it is this same Sir Walter Raleigh who is commonly credited with having introduced the potato into Ireland. Could Sir Walter Raleigh's servant have perceived what black and fearsome troubles the potatoes in his master's pockets or other receptacle would one day call down upon the Irish people, it is conceivable that he might have rushed out for something even more drastic than a bucket of water. The potato, undoubtedly,

is an elegant fruit. All men know that with beef, mutton, and flesh meats in general, it is everything that could be desired. As a staple article of food however, it cannot be considered otherwise than as a flagrant and wicked mistake. In Ireland the potato has become a staple article of food. Whole generations of Irishmen have battened upon it—in good times, with the addendum of a little buttermilk or a scrap of bacon, in bad times with the addendum of a pinch of salt. And as the times in Ireland have been immemorially bad times, the pinch of salt has been most frequently to the fore. In plain words, the Irish people are a potato-fed people. In theory the potato might well have been specially created by Providence to fit in with the Irish temperament. The Irish temperament has distinct tendencies in the direction of indolence; the potato, heaven be thanked, is a tuber which does not demand too great a skill or too great an amount of labour in cultivation. You cut it up, dump it into the ground, and it grows of itself. Also it is a prolific plant, and will make more dead weight to the rood than almost anything else that grows—the which,

of course, saves digging. A peasant with a potato-patch is believed to be wholly beyond the reach of hunger, and his standard of emolument may conveniently be adjusted for him accordingly. He himself is aware that it is out of his potato-patch that he and his family have got to subsist, and that all the rest is luxury of the most bloated order. Philosophers can invariably dispense with luxury, and the Irishman is a philosopher. He can afford to sit and watch his potatoes growing, as content as any king. For not only shall that green plant yield unto him and the "childer" the staff of life, but it shall also furnish for him the wherewithal for the innocent manufacture of potheen, which is life itself. It is a singular fact, though a fact big with meaning, that while the Irishman has been a potato-grower from Raleigh's time, he has not succeeded in attracting to himself any special reputation as a cultivator in this department. Nobody sets up the Irish potato for a peculiar delicacy. Jersey, Cheshire, Lancashire, and parts of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire have secured for themselves all the glory and honour and profit which is to be got out of potato-growing. It is said,

however, that the Irish can cook a potato against anybody in the world; but this is doubtful, inasmuch as the Dublin potato—and for that matter the Cork or Kilkenny or Newry potato—is neither better nor worse cooked than the common tuber of Cockaigne. This, however, is by the way. The hard fact is that all over Ireland you are brought face to face with a poverty and a desolation which are the palpable outcome of too great a reliance upon a doubtful staple. The very physique of the people bears abundant witness to the circumstance that a diet of pure potato is not good for one. It induces a ricketiness of build, a lankness and a want of tone; not to mention a confirmed hungriness of look. Quite half the people of Ireland might pass for persons who had lately been emulating the fasting man, or had just been let loose from a severe term of penal servitude. It is intolerable that it should be so, but there is no getting away from it. The Irish people are physiologically underfed. They may eat to repletion, but as even an Irish potato consists mainly of starch and water, precious little corporeal good is to be got out of it.

When the body is starved, the mind dwindles and languishes. A potato-fed man can no more be witty or wise or energetic than a man fed on draff and husks. That is why the Irish have almost entirely lost the spirits and the volatility and the graces for which they were formerly renowned. If you are to make good use of an Irishman, as of any other man, you must ply him with nutriment. The potato is not nutriment in anything like a complete sense. Even that exceedingly popular work, *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, has no feeling for the potato where the Irish are concerned. Under the head of "Ireland," I find, among others, the following sentences: "Introduced by Raleigh in 1610, the cultivation of this dangerous tuber developed with extraordinary rapidity." "When Petty wrote, early in Charles II.'s reign, this demoralising esculent was already the national food." "When the 'precarious exotic' failed, an awful famine was the result." The *Encyclopædia Britannica* also obliges us with the appended information: "The labour of one man could plant potatoes enough to feed forty. . . . Potatoes cannot be kept very long, but there was no attempt

to keep them at all; they were left in the ground, and dug as required. A frost which penetrated deep caused the famine of 1739. Even with the modern system of storing in pits, the potato does not last through the summer, and the 'meal months'—June, July and August—always brought great hardship. . . . Between 1831 and 1842, there were six seasons of dearth, approaching in some places to famine. . . . In 1845 the population had swelled to 8,295,061, the greater part of whom depended on the potato only." The greater part of the population of Ireland proper—that is to say of Ireland with Northern Diamond left out—depends upon the potato to this day. It is a state of affairs which cannot be too severely deprecated; it is a state of affairs which ought in no circumstances to be allowed to continue; it is a state of affairs which convinces one only too clearly that Ireland has for centuries been governed either by rogues or by blockheads. Yet the potato, like the tourist, does not appear hitherto to have been written down for an Irish grievance or injustice. True, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* condemns it as

we have seen; but it does so rather by innuendo than of set purpose. I am not aware that the restriction of potato growing has ever figured as a plank in the platform of the Irish Party. Indeed, to suggest it, would have looked like infamy in the face of the condition of the people. But until the Irish are taught that the potato is not the first and last thing God made, they will remain open to the disasters and the disabilities which too great a dependence upon it have invariably brought about. It is lamentable to note the limitations of the Irish mind as to what is possible in the matter of food. With sixpence, your indigenous, starving Irishman will purchase inevitably a dish of potatoes and as much whisky as can be screwed out of the money when the potatoes have been paid for. The beer and bread and cheese, or bread and bacon of the English rustic may be reckoned a Lucullian feast in comparison, and they are at least three times more nourishing to the body, if not to the brain. And the worst of it is, that your proper potato-fed Irishman cannot forego his hereditary appetite for the "esculent" aliment of his country any more than a

Scotchman can forego oatmeal and offal. In the midst of plenty an Irishman of the Irish will make for potatoes as surely as the needle makes for the north. He prefers them. To take an instance, Mr George Bernard Shaw believes himself to be a vegetarian by free-will and out of altruism. In point of fact, vegetarianism is easy and possible for him, because he is an Irishman, and consequently comes of an ingrained, potato-feeding stock, however remote. His wit and other parts, if any, are to be accounted for by the circumstance that he has the good sense to supplement his potato-flour with pea-meal, coco-butter, and other garnishes. A few thousand tons of lentils, with pepper and salt to taste, would do Ireland more good than a new Land Act. She has had enough potato and enough Land Acts to last her for the next hundred years.

CHAPTER XIX

PIGS

In Ireland the pig has long been understood to pay the rent. Hence, no doubt, it comes to pass that Irish rents are not always paid up. That an animal such as the pig, a grunting, grovelling wallower in sloughs, should be so popular a favourite among the Irish does not speak too well for them. In England the favourite and most bepraised domestic beast is the dog. The keeping of a pup of some sort is a mark of true English blood. Dogs in Ireland do not appear to be so popular. The fact is, of course, that the pig has been thrust down the Irish throat by greedy, grasping landlordism. Their worships, the factors and agents, perceiving that good man Patrick was hard put to it for the means of subsistence when he had satisfied their rapacious demands, informed him blithely that a pig would make an

admirable domestic pet and addendum to the potato-patch, and, unlike a common dog, could, when you have petted him to a certain sleekness, be killed and eaten, or salted and sold. So that the wild Irishman has taken to pig-keeping with a zest which is without parallel among other races; whereas for dogs he has little or no room. The English collier, who on being met in a lane with a couple of fine terriers, was asked by a thrifty land-holder if he, the collier, might not have shown greater wisdom had he spent his money on pigs rather than on terriers, replied: "Perhaps so, but a man would look a damned fool going ratting wi' two pigs." One supposes that in Ireland if the people ever do go ratting, they do it with these same porkers.

Quite apart from questions of sport, however, the pig is certainly not the sweetest of quadrupeds, and to have him with you continually in the house, like William had Dora, must be something of a trial, rent or no rent. It is notable, as indicating the difference between the treatment meted out to the English and to the Irish, that when a certain woman of Epping, or some such

neighbourhood, took to the keeping of pigs on the Irish principle, she was swooped down upon by the authorities who have charge of the public sanitation, and compelled to part with her pet. In Ireland you can maintain familiarly in your kitchen as many pigs as you like, and nobody will interfere with you. Possibly the relationship between the Irishman and his pig might be considered reasonable if one were by any means certain that when the pig has discharged his duties as a household pet and come squalling to the knife, he were really meat for the Irishman and his family. I am afraid, however, that in too many instances the people are so frightfully poor that the bulk and best parts of the family pig's carcase pass out of Ireland on to the breakfast tables of the bloated English, under the name and guise of Irish provisions. On the whole, one inclines to the view that even as, in the long run, the Irish would be the happier and the better fed without the potato, they might with advantage dispense also with the pig. It sounds like rank heresy, but I commend this suggestion to all thoughtful legislators. The pig requires neither care nor attention

in the matter of his bringing up; he is a feeder on refuse and garbage; he would just as soon sleep on your domestic hearth as in the snuggest stye that was ever built, and, generally speaking, he may be considered a very proper beast for association with an indolent man. With the potatoes shooting up merrily forninst your cabin door, and the pig fattening himself gruntingly and without assistance from yourself, you may well recline in honied ease and never really trouble to do a day's work. And it follows that in the course of time you fall irrevocably into the potato-and-pig habit, and acquiesce in the potato-and-pig standard of living, comfort, and culture. You vegetate like the tuber, and you grunt and snore and thrive on nothing, like the porker. It suits the landlords and the legislators, and the philosophers, and it fits in entirely with that taint of indolence which always lurks in the Irish blood. The farming of one pig, not to mention the keeping of pigs in cabins, should be prohibited by Act of Parliament. There would naturally be great howls from the Irish people, for nobody is loved with a greater love, or

treated with a greater amount of respect in Ireland, than the single pig. But he is a blight and a mistake, and a failure both economically and socially. The Irish of America, it is true, have made large fortunes out of him. There are cities in America that have been built entirely on pig, and the American pork-packing interest appears to keep quite half the country going. But how have these things been accomplished? Certainly not by the breeding and rearing of single pigs in people's houses. No, the American Irish have gone in for pig-keeping on wholesale and colossal lines. They have turned the gentleman that pays the rent out of the house into fields and pens, they have made a business of the feeding and fattening of him, and they have erected mammoth factories wherein he may be slaughtered and salted down by the thousand. Ireland might with indisputable advantage take a leaf out of the bulky lard-stained book of Chicago. Irish bacon will always command quite as good a price as the best American that was ever exported. The English market for it is practically inexhaustible, but apparently nobody but the Americans has enterprise

or courage enough to exploit that market. In America the pigs for the packing trade are understood to be fed on apples and pea-flour, and I have seen it suggested that because they are amply supplied with these staples, the American pig-feeders will always have the advantage of possible competitors. There are neither apples nor pea-flour in Ireland; but there is the potato, and if ever an article of food was designed for a special sort of beast, the potato was designed for the pig. The Irish should endeavour to remember that if the potato have any virtue at all, it was intended for the feeding of pigs, and not of human beings. The English farmer does not, when the dinner hour draws nigh, lead forth his wife and children to his hay-chamber for nutriment, and the Irishman should have just as small a gustatory regard for his store of potatoes. It is pig-feed, my dear Patrick, pig-feed, and not victuals at all. If the English peasantry were to take to a diet of chopped hay and husks to-morrow, the English landlords would not lift a little finger to prevent them, and within a twelvemonth they would adjust matters by putting up rents all round. So

long as you, the low wild Irish, choose to be content with the same diet as your household pet, so long may you remain content, and so long will the landlords look to it that you get no other food. I do not believe for a moment that Ireland is going to be regenerated on political, measure-making Parliamentary lines. Her regeneration will have to come out of herself. So much of it as has already been accomplished has come wholly out of herself, and not out of legislation at all. The rest will follow if the Irish people have a mind to deal as straightly with themselves in the future as they have dealt with themselves in the past. And I should say that at all costs the potato-and-pig habit, as it now exists in Ireland, should be broken, and got rid of, and utterly wiped out.

CHAPTER XX

EMIGRATION

When Ireland desires to sup the sweeter drops out of the cup of sorrow, she has a way of babbling about exiles from Erin, and that kind of thing. That her population has been greatly reduced by emigration cannot be denied; neither can one get away from the fact that the true-blooded Irishman has a peculiar affection for the soil on which he was born, and that the pains of expatriation have for him a special and almost intolerable poignancy. But excepting as it bears upon the peace of mind of individuals, on the breaking-up of homes, and the wrenching of family ties, I do not think that the emigration which it is the fashion so to deplore has been at all a bad thing for Ireland. It is clear that if the country is

incapable of supporting adequately the mass of the people now resident in it, the persons who have left it for fresh woods and pastures new are on the whole to be congratulated. If it be contended that it is shameful that a man should be compelled to leave his native country because that country does not offer sufficient scope for his energies, and fails to provide for him the means of rational human subsistence, I should say that Ireland is by no means singular in such failure. The Scotch emigrate, and boast about it. "Scotland is a stony country," they say, "there are plenty of mouths and little wherewith to fill them; lo, we will go forth into the undiscovered places of the world, and seek food and fortune where they are most likely to be found." The Irish, on the other hand, weep and wail, and keen about it. "We are leaving the ould counthry, ochone, wirra, wirra, and wirrasthrue! I'll sit at the top of Vinegar Hill, and there I'll weep till I've wept my fill, and every tear would turn a mill; for, bedad, it's acrost the say I'll be afther goin', and, glory knows, when I'll be afther comin' back again. Good-bye, Terence, and Bryan, and Pathrick, and

Judy, and Kathleen, and all the rest of yez. It's me that's got to leave yez, and may all the leading fiends assail the dhirthy Government!" And so on and so forth. Tears and howls are the Irish emigrant's stock-in-trade. I do not deny that this is wrong, but it seems possible that a great deal too much capital has been made out of it, both by the poets and by the politicians. Excepting at the immediate hour of embarkation, the Irish emigrant makes a very good emigrant indeed. If his emigration takes him only so far as England, he becomes at once an industrious, and not infrequently a fairly prosperous, member of the community. If his emigration takes him to America the same thing happens to him, and he has been known to blossom out into millionairedom. Why weep for him, why recite touching poetry about him, and why call the Government names on his behoof? It is the people who are left at home who should be cried over, and recited over, and whose condition should provoke the obsecration of the Government. Of course, the real truth about the Irish emigrant is that when he gets into a new country, he is compelled to

fall into line with a scheme of existence which is far in advance of anything which has been considered possible in his own country. The great stumbling-blocks of his life, namely, the potato patch and the pig, pass forthwith out of his purview. In England he must live like a civilised being, in a house erected and maintained on lines which conform to the requirements of County Councils and sanitary authorities; very naturally, too, he drops into the English view as to diet, clothing, recreations, and the like, and to secure these things he is compelled to work, maybe twelve, or it may be fourteen hours a day. If the work be hard, it is more or less regular, and the pay is sure, and, from the Irish standpoint, princely. In America, with anything like luck, the Irish emigrant finds himself even more favourably conditioned, and if he possesses an ounce of sense—and he usually does—there are chances for him which lead to prosperity.

At home, in Ireland, the Irishman of the poorer class, and even of the middle class, is absolutely without opportunity. He must take things as they are, and if he ever thinks

about such matters at all, resign himself to the mean, and uninspiring facts. There is nothing in Ireland that a man who wishes to get along in life may do ; the fact being that the country is exhausted, and devoid of the elements which are necessary to activity. And it seems more than likely that this state of affairs will continue for many years to come. Capital that is not backed up by arrant greed has become extremely rare of late. There is little hope for Ireland in the modern sense, unless she be exploited, and for some reason or other, exploitation is nowadays attempted only by persons without bowels, who, with all their exploiting, succeed only in enriching themselves, and degrading the persons who toil for them. I have said before that Ireland's true regeneration must come from within. When she took to emigration she began practically this work. For years it has been the only way for her ; it will go on just as long as it is necessary and good for her. Meanwhile the people at home must be roused from their apathy. If the gentlemen who periodically stump the country with a miscellaneous selection of political and religious shibboleths would

direct some of their energy and oratory to the social and intimate life of the Irish people, they might yet accomplish for Ireland a work that would be of real benefit to her. There is far too much complacency, even in the ranks of Ireland's best wishers. It is taken for granted that the main body of the people of Ireland are peasants ; everybody speaks of them as peasants, and everybody talks of them as peasants. When Goldsmith wrote about "a bold peasantry, their country's pride," he did not mean peasantry in the same way that the glib writers and talkers of our own day mean it. The word "peasant," like many another good word, has had its ups and downs, and for the last half-century, if not for a longer period, "peasant," as applied to an Irishman, has amounted really to a condemnation and an excuse. "Ah, my dear sir," cry the wise, "you do not know the Irish peasant!" If one is to believe all that one hears, the Irish peasant is a sort of inferior, inhuman creation. Anything is good enough for him, and, like the dog in the adage, the less you give him and the more you kick him, the better he will like you. One never hears the slackest politician

of them all talking or writing about "the English peasant." It is "the sturdy men of Kent," "the hardy men of Yorkshire," and "comrades," and "fellow-workers," all the time. These men eat bacon and cheese, and as much beef as they can lay tooth upon; also they drink beer in and out of season and by the bucketful; also their children are reasonably well-fed and reasonably well-clad. There's not the smallest boy in England but thravels in his shoes. Hence the English peasantry retain those qualities of boldness and masterfulness and independence, without which a peasantry cannot thrive. And nobody dare call them "peasants," nor offer them the treatment which peasants are commonly supposed to delight in. The Irish need to be taught that they are a race of men, and not merely dreamers, and martyrs, and kickable persons. And the first thing for a proper man to do is to make sure that himself and his family live like human beings and compass the food and shelter and decencies which are nowadays considered necessary to human beings. The Irish politicians have helped Ireland to something in the nature of reasonable government;

they might now conveniently lay themselves out to help her into something that resembles reasonable living. At the forthcoming General Election, we are told, great political and party play is to be made with that ancient and bedraggled question, Home Rule. The friends of Ireland, and the friends of England, fancy that they see in it something which is going to be very good for Ireland. In point of fact it is a matter of which next to nothing would have been heard, had not Mr Balfour stood in sore need of a red herring to drag across the idiot noses of the electorate. From Mr Balfour's point of view, no doubt, the resurrection of the Home Rule bogey is a singularly adroit move. It will confuse the fiscal tariff-mongers; it will placate the dunder-headed Liberal party, and it will tickle the Irish to death. But any man who believes for one moment that it will be of the smallest benefit to Ireland is just a fool. England made up her mind long ago that Home Rule for Ireland was a sheer impossibility; and what is more to the point, Ireland proper, and in the mass, is of the same opinion. If she desires to take advantage of the opportunities which a General

Election is bound to provide for her, she will let Home Rule severely alone, and base her demands on less political, but considerably more urgent and vital things.

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